

# The November Coalition

Vol. 7 No. 1

## The Razor Wire

Winter 2003

### The November Coalition hits the road

Journey for Justice aims to mobilize support for freeing drug war prisoners

BY PHIL SMITH—THE WEEK ONLINE WITH DRCNET, Oct 4, 2002

Frustrated by the lack of progress in Congress on undoing drug war sentencing policies that have left nearly half a million Americans behind bars, a hundred thousand of them in the federal prison system alone, the November Coalition is hitting the road to energize the group's membership, seek new support, and add thousands of signatures to its ongoing petition campaign asking Congress to "redress drug war injustice."

November Coalition leader Nora Callahan and her husband and fellow activist Chuck Armsbury are departing from their home headquarters in Colville, WA, on a low budget, high energy journey that will take them across the Rockies and the Northern Plains, into Michigan, and on to the East Coast, where they will join with other drug reform leaders in Washington, DC, on November 1 before turning around and heading West again.

"This is the first of a series of journeys for justice," said Armsbury. "In the Gandhian tradition, we are going from town to town, prison to prison, camp meeting to camp meeting to fortify our membership and strengthen our movement."

"Our members live all over the country," said Callahan. "Not only the prisoners scattered across the land, but their families trying to raise children for them, the elderly couples whose sons and daughters are locked up, they are all devastated by the burdens this mad rush to incarceration has imposed on them. These people are forced to use precious money and vacation time to visit their loved ones," she explained. "So we are traveling to those communities and those prisons to meet the people. We should be planning for freedom together, not standing alone in motels wondering if that other person is also there to visit a prisoner."

If Callahan and Armsbury are hoping to energize the grassroots, early indications are that they are succeeding. Iowa resident Larry Schulenberg, whose son Martin is serving a 9-year sentence, is traveling with the group. Schulenberg, whose son Martin is serving a 9-year sentence, is traveling with the group. Schulenberg, whose son Martin is serving a 9-year sentence, is traveling with the group.

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### Journey for Justice in Michigan

KEVIN ZEESE, PRESIDENT OF COMMON SENSE FOR DRUG POLICY—Oct 10, 2002

I just returned from the first stop on the November Coalition's Journey for Justice. The Journey had an incredibly strong send off from the Detroit/Ann Arbor communities. They set a standard for other communities to emulate, meet and hopefully—as good as Detroit was—surpass!

The Michigan stop included seven events along with a number of media opportunities. As Congressman John Conyers, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee in the US House of Representatives said at the main event in Detroit, "If the victims of the drug war stand united they will form a political constituency that could end the drug war." That is the essence of the goal of the Journey for Justice—to activate a constituency of people directly affected by the drug war so that they can become an effective army against the drug war.

Events began on Friday, October 11 with a small meeting including a dozen African-American men in Detroit. After meeting with Nora and Chuck—discussing the drug war, sentencing, lack of treatment—they agreed to form a new chapter of the November Coalition. One thing they said that became a common refrain for the weekend was "It is time for the various races to work together to end the drug war." If you want to get active with the new November Coalition chapter contact Amanda Brazel at: amarajane@yahoo.com

Amanda reports that the new November Coalition chapter will be holding meetings at the Unitarian Church in Detroit.

The next event was held at the University of Michigan that night. The SSDP chapter of U of M worked with the Drug Policy Forum of Michigan to organize the event. A November Coalition slide show was shown at the beginning highlighting the lives of many drug war victims and providing key facts about the drug war. Nora, Chuck and I spoke along with representatives from

SSDP and DPF MI. Approximately 60 people attended the event on a Friday night. About half of the attendees joined us in a march through Ann Arbor after the forum where we carried signs urging an end to the drug war and chanted slogans. The goal of these events was to give attendees the tools they need to become more active and effective in working for reform.

Nora filmed a local television show the next morning—"For My People"—a discussion show where the injustice of the drug war with a special focus on its impact on the Black community was discussed.

The main event for the Journey in the Detroit area was held at the University of Detroit School of Law. The Saturday event, lasting from 1:00 to 5:30 PM was attended by over 100 people.

Happily, two members of Congress attended: Rep. John Conyers and Representative Cheeks-Kilpatrick (who also happens to be the mother of the Mayor of Detroit). To have two

members of Congress attending, just a few weeks before very important elections was a major coup for the Journey for Justice and DPF MI. Rep. Conyers is strongly with the reform movement—he believes the drug war needs to be ended and wants to see us develop the political base needed to affect the national legislative process. He congratulated the Journey for its effort at building a national grassroots base. Rep. Kilpatrick began agreeing that there is "No Justice in the War on Drugs"—the slogan of the November Coalition—and also applauded the national coalition building of the Journey for Justice. She noted "We are all recovering from something."

Rep. Kilpatrick, while still needing some education on some drug policy issues, understands that the drug war



Forum audience at Mercy School of Law—10/12/02

### Federal parole bill orphaned with death of sole sponsor

Activists, prisoners look to other bills, other sponsors

FROM THE WEEK ONLINE WITH DRCNET

Just as prisoners were beginning to get excited about Rep. Patsy Mink's bill to reinstate parole in the federal system, the 74 year-old Hawaii Democrat succumbed to complications from the chicken pox in Honolulu on September 29, 2002.

"This is terribly sad news, and so sudden," said Monica Pratt, director of legal affairs for Families Against Mandatory Minimums ([www.famm.org](http://www.famm.org)). "We applaud Patsy Mink for what she did. She showed leadership on an issue that is important but not popular, and that is courageous," Pratt told DRCNet.



"Patsy Mink believed in social justice and that bill was her swan song," said the November Coalition's ([www.november.org](http://www.november.org)) Nora Callahan. "The prisoners are disappointed, naturally, but there is hope in the prisons that her fellow compassionate Democrats will step up. Any representative who recognizes the injustice of the drug war can honor Patsy Mink's bravery and memory by cosponsoring her bill," she told DRCNet.

But they will need to fix it first, said Pratt. In an indication of the complexity of writing sentencing legislation, jailhouse lawyers, activists and Mink's staff have been wrestling over whether the Mink bill as written would or would not actually have an impact on the thousands of prisoners serving mandatory minimum drug sentences and whether it would be retroactive.

"Our reading of the bill is that it would not be retroactive and would not apply to anyone sentenced under the mandatory minimums," said Pratt. "Mink intended for it to be retroactive and to affect those with mandatory minimum sentences, but there were technical errors in drafting the bill. We were talking to folks in Mink's office about improving the bill, and FAMM will do our part to make a new version the best bill it can be so it impacts the most people," she said.

The November Coalition's Callahan wasn't so sure the bill was flawed, but said, "If it isn't retroactive, then let's fix it. Bills are improved all the time." Callahan said that the Coalition had faxed some suggestions to Mink's office before the veteran legislator died. While Mink's bill was the most striking attack on the glutinous growth of the federal gulag, it is not the only bill pending that addresses sentencing reform:

*Continued on page 10*

### Taking the profit out of illegal drugs

Congressman Dan Burton has a question

The following is conservative Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN) speaking at the House Government Reform Committee hearing in Congress on "America's Heroin Crisis, Colombian Heroin and How We Can Improve Plan Colombia." December 12, 2002.

**Dan Burton:** I want to tell you something. I have been in probably a hundred or a hundred and fifty hearings like this at various times in my political career. And the story is always the same. This goes back to the sixties. You know, thirty or thirty five years ago. And every time I have a hearing, I hear that people who get hooked on heroin and cocaine become addicted and they very rarely get off of it. And the scourge expands and expands and expands. And we have very fine law enforcement officers like you go out and fight the fight. And you see it growing and growing, and you see these horrible tragedies occur. But there is no end to it.

And I see young guys driving around in tough areas of Indianapolis in cars that I know they can't afford and I know

*Continued on page 4*

Late Breaking News!  
Michigan reforms drug sentencing laws!

Story on page 5

*Continued on page 13*

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



"The drug war is a fraud," Callahan repeated again and again. "This isn't a war on drugs, it's a war on people ... Tax dollars are paying for a system that causes more harm than any illegal drugs ever did." — **Nora Callahan, The November Coalition, in Detroit's Metro Times, Oct 16, 2002**

It was Debbie Helm's line, but it was so good back on September 27, 1999 on the capitol steps in Texas that the Austin American-Statesman newspaper quoted her in the article headlined, *Protesters Ask For Help From Bush On Drug Cases*.

Republican presidential front-runner George W Bush refuses to say whether he ever used illegal drugs and says his youthful "mistakes" have no bearing on his fitness for office. Like most Americans, Debbie Helm agrees — she just wants a similar standard applied to her husband.

"If Governor Bush thinks he's good enough for the White House, then I think my husband is good enough for our house," said Helm, whose husband, Jim, is serving an 18-year sentence for conspiring to sell marijuana.

I thought back then, that the line, that sentiment ought to be shared at the White House steps, wherever George W. Bush stepped, as long as he was out in front of us. The hypocrisy of the drug war must end, and with it the injustice. So I shared Debbie Helm's line again in front of the White House before the police shut down the megaphone. Now that it's off my chest, we all ought to take Deb's line to heart. The hypocrisy has to end. "The drug war does more harm than good" is an early slogan of the Drug Policy Foundation.

Our group has been sharing each others' 'lines' for almost six years, and this year more loved ones and other members began speaking in public forums. To name a few, Cait Callen prepared and delivered a presentation at the Harm Reduction Coalition conference in Seattle in December. Deb Dedmon of Las Vegas prepared and presented at the Conference of Students for Sensible Drug Policy and the Marijuana Policy Project in Anaheim, California in mid-November. I'm very proud of them.

John Chase and Jodi James met with new November Coalition volunteers at the December conference in Nashville: *Let My People Go*. Religious Leaders for a Just and Compassionate Drug Policy hosted this conference, representing a group of religious leaders both clergy and religious academics who believe that the war on drugs' unmerciful and stringent drug laws against users, abusers and sellers have resulted in cruel and unusual punishment.

Rachel Morton, Sharon North and others continued organizing vigils, traveling to Sacramento June 6<sup>th</sup> in opposition

to the federal raids on medical marijuana gardens approved last decade by voters. Volunteer organizers are busy laying plans for the Southern Journey for Justice that begins in January 2003. In Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Southern California volunteers are building an emerging schedule for the spring journey. We are on the move, have a beat, and we are growing.

We journey to inspire each other, meet face to face and strengthen resolve for this struggle. We share our 'lines' with each other, the public and media, reaching thousands of people who would never hear our simple, honest request for justice and a system of earned, early release on the federal level if we were silent.

Representative Dan Burton (R-IN) is beginning to ask interesting questions, Michigan mandatory sentencing has been reformed, New York state has a growing coalition of activists aligning with churches, as does the drug reform movement nationwide. Amnesty International and other leading human rights groups decry the inhumanity of the drug war. With states' budgets in crisis, more and more citizens and leaders are recognizing that prisons and punitive drug policy is a cost of injustice we can't afford — fiscally or morally. We are not alone, nor have we been forgotten.

We are beginning to identify congressional support for early release, and have included another copy of the Petition with this issue. Please make copies and gather signatures of support! You will also find a sample letter on page 3. Retype or hand write it and send a copy to your Congressional Representative and your two Senators in January and each month — send another letter. Urge everyone you know to do the same. **Send us copies of your replies; this is very important.**

These pages should express to our persevering members, a wrap-up of year 2002 and presentation of our first Journey for Justice reports. We look forward to hearing your comments, and meeting many more of you in our upcoming travels.

This holiday season my deepest appreciation is extended to our members for supporting this collective work. On behalf of the prisoners of the drug war — thank you to the many concerned citizens that recognize injustice of the drug war, and join us in common struggle. May the year 2003 bring us freedom and justice!

Love,

"Although similar percentages of blacks and whites use drugs, 78% of incarcerated Americans are people of color. We all must journey for justice." — **Barbara Fair, People Against Injustice, New Haven, CT, Nov 22, 2002 on the local nightly news.**



"I was listening to a group of women in Brooklyn led by November Coalition member Teresa Aviles and it struck me how the people most left behind are the women. As a movement, we haven't really grasped the impact of taking away these women's husbands, brothers, fathers and sons." — **The Week Online with DRCnet, Nov 1, 2002**



**OUR DRUG POLICY HAS TO ENCOMPASS A COMPASSIONATE, PRAGMATIC VIEW OF OUR FELLOW NEIGHBORS. AND RIGHT NOW IT DOES NOT DO THAT. IT'S SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF MOSTLY VULNERABLE PEOPLE."** — **MISSOULA INDEPENDENT (MT), AUG 29, 2002**

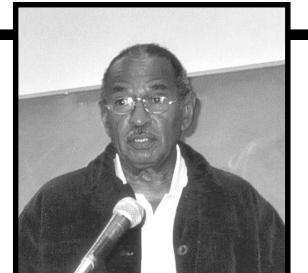
"My brother is in prison for drugs; I was isolated and ashamed, but neither anymore." — **Week Online with DRCnet, Nov 1, 2002**



"So far the response has been good. We have been raising a few eyebrows and piquing interest lately. A lot of people were not aware of our issues; they just went along with the government message that all drug users are bad and need to be prosecuted. That isn't the way it needs to be. I encourage everyone to get involved, because the drug war affects us all in one way or another, or at least people we know." — **Amanda Brazel, Students for Sensible Drug Policy and November Coalition in the South End Newspaper, Oct 9, 2002**



"If the victims of the drug war stand united they will form a political constituency that could end the drug war." — **Rep. John Conyers (D-MI)**



"We knew the November Coalition was coming, and it just made sense to work together. We don't want any more prisons in Connecticut, and we know that the drug war is causing prison overcrowding. Drug possessors and low-level sellers don't need to be there. We'll see how we can connect, and the Journey provides us with new connections and renews old ones. We haven't done a project specific to the drug war for awhile, and now we're talking about it again." — **Sally Joughin, People Against Injustice to the Week Online with DRCnet, Nov 1, 2002**



  
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Founded in 1997, the Coalition is a network of volunteers across the nation whose mission is to end the drug war, release the prisoners of the drug war and restore civil rights. Through public demonstrations and other educational projects and programs, our members expose the injustice of the war on drugs and the folly of prohibition.

Membership: \$6/year for prisoners;  
\$25 regular; \$15 students.

To join The November Coalition and receive a subscription to this newspaper, see membership form on page 4.

The Razor Wire is available for bulk distribution.

If you own or operate a retail store, contact our office for information about bulk distribution.

TNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

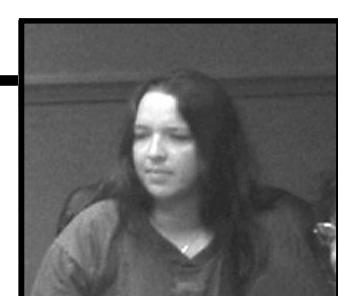
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"There's more support [for drug law reform] amongst the people than the legislators. They're behind the eight ball. There's a lot of people in the city of Detroit that see and feel the damage caused by the war on drugs, so there is a lot of support behind it." — **Debra Wright, DPFMI, in The Metro Times, Oct 16, 2002**

"I met Nora for the first time - I can't begin to describe the feeling to finally meet someone that you have this "attachment" to, because we are ALL in this together. After a few hugs, we sat down and began to talk - talk about anything and everything - you know, the things that go unsaid until you are able to meet face to face. During the course of the evening, we spoke and discussed many issues, but it always seems to have more meaning when you are among those that have the same ambition and drive to end this drug war." — **Susie Ricketts, November Regional Leader, Morgantown Report**

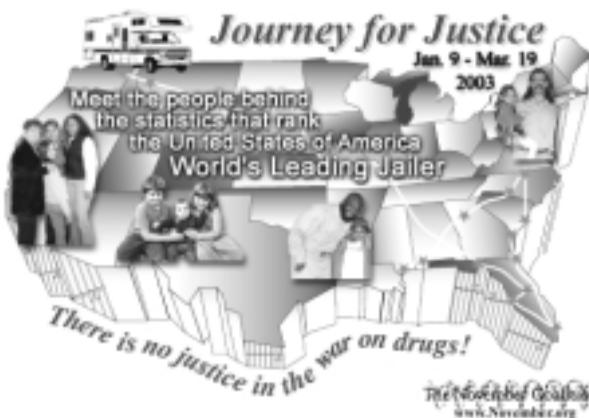
**"TO SEE SO MANY STUDENTS IS COMFORTING. I SIGHED WITH RELIEF. THIS JOURNEY IS ABOUT RELIEF FROM THE INJUSTICE OF THE DRUG WAR. I'M RELIEVED TO SEE SO MANY ACTIVISTS WORKING, EXPERIENCING DIRECTLY THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABORS. I'M RELIEVED TO SEE THE 'BROAD AND DIVERSE MOVEMENT' IS MORE 'BROAD AND DIVERSE' THAN I THOUGHT IT WAS! VERY ACTIVE, TOO!"** — **NORA CALLAHAN, WESLEYEN REPORT, OCT 22, 2002**



# Journey for Justice rolls south in January

**R**oll 'em up, and move 'em out, the Journey for Justice is what it's all about. Heads up Florida. Look out for us Carolinas; we'll be there to see you too — Journey for Justice is coming through.

It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey for Justice in our planned four-year series, and we're leaving January 8th for the Southeastern USA. We want to meet you, to visit, to share, to plan and to rekindle hope.



Nora and Chuck begin this Southern Journey with the experience needed to improve on our Northeast trek last fall. For this next leg, our 'Camp Meeting' with relatives who visit loved ones in a nearby prison remains the centerpiece illustrating why we're doing this. We learned how difficult these visits become and how individuals think about it and deal with it. We were often overwhelmed by their powerful resolve to keep the family together despite a bizarre maze of prison rules that often demoralize individuals and discourage any leftover family unity.

We'll be meeting the press, talking on the radio, holding vigils, taking part in church services and visiting southern colleges. And the schedule is filling rapidly. What is it about someone coming to town? It's about hearing news of the drug war from a national perspective, and it's about identifying with a larger entity.

It's about having your own, personal drug war horror story heard by those who know what you're talking about. It's about time for tears to flow and converting angst to activism.

It's time to express power, foster dignity, assert demands and call for justice. For individuals with loved ones doing long prison sentences it's a time to decide how and why to struggle without letup. We're coming to your region because we are convinced you don't want to live in resentment and fear of your government, and wondered if anything can change. After all, who hasn't felt that nothing can be done?

The Southern Journey for Justice continues with a spirit of resolve. We know that an informed and aroused citizenry can talk to prison officials, members of Congress and the media about what we need from them. What we need from elected and employed officials alike is acknowledgment and respect. U.S. communities should have a say and a permanent position in the legal process, during confinement, and after a prisoner goes home.

One of the concrete ways we hear you 'talking power' to elected leaders is the 25,000 names of citizens who have already signed the Petition for Relief from Drug War Injustice. With higher levels of unity and confidence in our efforts, who's to say it won't be long before we'll stand before Congress with 100,000 names of people demanding a reasonable early release system for the prisoners of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, 60% of whom are serving drug sentences?

We want real change in the release policies of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. We want prison staff from the superintendent on down to respect the public's interest in what happens to people behind bars. We want everyone to understand that now there's 'someone new' at the criminal justice table, and they are not just passive partners. Finally, we challenge prison administrators to come out of their walled offices to meet us, to exchange views, to escape their own awkward silence, and to tell us what they want for a just system.

Look at the developing schedule on the back page and start now to plan how we'll meet in your region. See you soon!

[www.JourneyforJustice.org](http://www.JourneyforJustice.org)

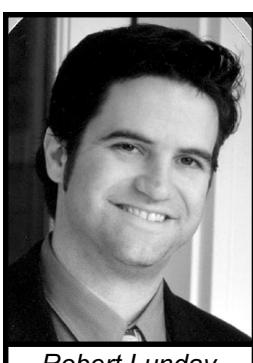
*"...treatment for drug addicts must be made available like any other health service, because in most cases drug addiction and abuse are symptoms of larger societal problems ... we want to see money invested directly into our children instead of the drug war, because the best way to prevent adolescent drug use is to keep kids active and involved in life. The third is to restore justice to the current system, because we must address the obvious racism there as well as give judges the power to sentence people, rather than rely on mandatory sentencing. And last, we must face up to the fact that prohibition simply does not work." — Kevin Zeese, President of Common Sense for Drug Policy in the Missoula Independent (MT), Aug 29, 2002*



Rosanne Scotti termed the drug war "institutionalized racism. Let's at least talk about it, group by group, neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city. New Jersey's horrible racial-profiling problem was motivated by drugs. Perhaps it would have made sense (that a disproportionate number of blacks were stopped on highways by police) if African-Americans used drugs more than whites. But the government's own studies show that African-Americans use drugs at a slightly lower rate than whites." — Trenton Times (NJ), Oct 31, 02

## In memoriam

This last year, two dear friends of the November Coalition passed away—Robert Lunday and Cyndi West. Our profound sympathy goes out to their friends and families. They are missed.



Robert Lunday



Cyndi West with her family

## Sample letter for your legislators

Dear Honorable \_\_\_\_\_:

Last summer H.R. 5296, a bill to revive federal parole for U.S. prisoners was introduced in the House by the Hon. Patsy Mink of Hawaii. With the death of Rep. Mink her final passion for justice, H.R. 5296, died with her in the last congressional session.

Neither Ms. Mink's proposed legislation, or the spirit that impelled it, has died. It's only waiting for new life, and I'm looking for that same spirit, that similar desire for justice, in you. Will you consider stepping forward with other leaders in a determined call for a revival of federal parole or system of earned, early release?

Earned release would once again provide prisoners with an incentive to maintain exemplary behavior in prison, and prepare for their return to families and society. Prisoners reuniting earlier will increase the prospects for a successful reentry into society. Reviving parole for federal prisoners only makes sense. Isn't rewarding achievement the American way? Inhumane prison conditions and overcrowding are a direct result of bad law.

If you agree with these facts and logic, I hope you will reply to me and say, "Yes, I agree that earning one's way is the American way, and I will join with other leaders in support of new legislation to revive parole."

Sincerely,  
(Your name and contact information)

### TNC hits the road, continued from page 1

sentence on drug charges at a federal prison camp in Yankton, SD, told DRCNet he couldn't wait for the journey to come to his area. "This is a great opportunity to educate the public and the media about what's going on," said Schulenberg. "There will be a vigil at the prison, then a meeting at a local motel with families and friends of prisoners," he said. For Schulenberg, the journey is about ending an injustice that has hit home. "My son deserves to be punished," he said, "but not for 110 months in jail. There's a two-time loser in the same bust; he should have been serving more time than Martin, but he had names to give the feds."

Another November Coalition member, Debra Wright of Ann Arbor, MI, shares the enthusiasm and the desire for justice. "We're very excited here," she told DRCNet. "The journey is officially starting here in the Detroit area, and we are honored. We've got all kinds of events lined up, including a meeting with Congressman John Conyers, and we will hopefully get people talking about these issues," she said.

Common Sense for Drug Policy's Kevin Zeese is going to Detroit for the Journey, he told DRCNet. "The Journey for Justice is a big step," he said, "and we'll give it a good kickoff in Detroit. This is building the grassroots, and the Journey will be doing that at events across the Midwest, the Northeast, and the Mid-Atlantic area. This tour will build, educate, and activate people, and it has a great mix of public events, private meetings with family members, media appearances, demonstrations and more."

Debra Wright is an example of what the Journey hopes to stir up. Acting on her own, she contacted Zeese last year to help form the Drug Policy Forum of Michigan. "I'm a former prisoner and a former heroin addict clean now for 10 years," she said. "My interest lies in reforming the prison system and helping addicts." Now she is a regional coordinator for the November Coalition.

"We seek to inspire popular resistance to drug war injustice and help empower people in the grassroots," said Callahan. "We hope to find a hundred Debras."

How to measure the success of such an effort is a question with which the November Coalition has been grappling.

"When we get back, we'll sit down and try to evaluate qualitatively and quantitatively where we succeeded and where we need to rethink," said Armsbury. "We'll be looking at the number of signatures we get on our petitions, the number of new regional leaders, the number of new chapters formed to prepare for future journeys," he said. "We'll also look at the feedback we get. With this journey, what we would ordinarily hear secondhand at a conference, we will hear directly from the people and the communities involved," he said.

"We have to recognize that in any grassroots movement, there are grass bottoms and grass tops," said Callahan. "We have to learn from each other."

Although the November Coalition is seeking relief—any relief—for the hundreds of thousands of drug war prisoners, Callahan and Armsbury said their ultimate goal is much broader. "We want to end the war on drugs," said Armsbury. "We take a hard stand against this war waged on our people—everyone knows this isn't about drugs. Of course we would accept some relief for our people behind bars, but we need to start talking about dismantling the whole drug war superstructure. This is a discussion that needs to begin taking place among reform leaders, too, and soon," Armsbury continued. "As our organizers in Michigan wrote on their flyers, 'It's time for a change.'"

For information about Journey events in your area, visit the November Coalition Journey for Justice web site at <http://www.journeyforjustice.org>. And don't forget to sign the petition to redress drug war injustice while you are there!



Discussion group, 1st Unitarian Universalist Church, Detroit, MI—10/13/02

# Drug terror ads and kids don't mix

LYNN M. PALTROW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ADVOCATES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Last spring 2002 my children and I watched a family movie on the ABC Family Channel, and together we were exposed to the entertaining and fascinating world of drugs, drug money and violence.

Somewhere in the middle of the movie, part of a weeklong comedy series, the station ran an advertisement sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The advertisement offers stark pictures of teenagers talking about how they are really murderers, torturers and terrorists. The ad originally ran during the Super Bowl, costing taxpayers \$3.5 million, as part of a publicity campaign linking American youth who have tried illegal drugs with funding for terrorism.

In the version we saw, teenagers loom out at the viewer, saying such things as "I helped murder families in Colombia," "I helped kids learn how to kill," and "I helped blow up buildings." The teenagers justify their atrocities by noting that they were "just having fun."

The ONDCP Web site and President Bush claim that these ads provide an outlet for young people's idealism, enabling them to feel that they can contribute to the war against terrorism by giving up illegal drugs. However, for my children—who witnessed the 9/11 attacks from their Manhattan public school windows—any intended message about drugs and terrorism was lost. The ad not only failed to convey any coherent message regarding drugs, but it instead seemed to frighten them, making it appear that the threat of terrorism—so close to their actual home—comes somehow from American teenagers.

The ad frightened me as well, making me wonder why ABC would run such deceptive and scary material on a children's channel. I was so upset that I nearly turned off the television. Children, however, generally don't take kindly to having a television show turned off in the middle, and so to avoid a form

of domestic terrorism, we continued watching the movie.

During the next commercial break, there was another ad about drugs, but this one, in contrast to the earlier ad, celebrated them. In this ad, a pharmaceutical company was pushing the drug Zoloft™, which will allegedly fix depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. The ad's cartoon figure—appealing and accessible to children—suggested that viewers should know what is happening to their own bodies, and should have a say in how to treat their emotional health problems. The contradiction between the two ads was palpable—sometimes using drugs contributes to terrorism, but sometimes using

drugs contributes to mental health.

There is also a more subtle disparity between the two ads. In the ONDCP spot, one of the teenage actors says, "My life, my body." This phrase—a rallying cry for numerous social and political movements seeking to ensure personal liberty and bodily integrity—is said with sarcasm, meant to belittle the notion not only as selfish, but tantamount to traitorous. Yet, a few minutes later, the very same concept of personal autonomy and control fuels the advertising campaign for a mind-altering drug that will bring riches to an American pharmaceutical company.

The Zoloft™ ad also teaches that depression and post traumatic stress disorders are treatable and that people should not have to suffer from them needlessly. Yet, we know that some illegal drug use is related to self-medication for depression and post traumatic stress disorder. The two ads thus send contradictory messages here, as well, with one suggesting that self-medicating for these problems is a form of terrorism and

the other arguing that it is simply a matter of informed consumerism.

As if these two drug ads were not enough, just a few commercial breaks later there was yet another one. In the third ad, a man comes home to find his kitchen utterly destroyed. After initial surprise, he starts to panic—has some intruder attacked his family? He rushes into the living room to see if his loved ones are safe. And there, sitting serenely on the couch, is his wife, happily sipping her General Foods International Coffee™ and explaining, in not quite so many words, that her desperate need for a caffeine stimulant fix caused her to tear apart the kitchen to find the stuff. This ad startled my children, too—but only because it prompted me to start shrieking things like, "Oh my god! Now they are saying drug use and property destruction are good things!"

Although we had planned to watch the other scheduled comedies on the ABC Family channel that week, we decided to rent movies and read aloud instead. I would rather not have my children watch TV ads that promote and laud some drug users while different ads—funded by our government, no less—spread misinformation and teach intolerance and prejudice against other drug users.

I do, of course, talk to my children about the many risks associated with all forms of drug use and abuse. But I also talk to them about responsibility and the hypocrisy apparent when our government will spend millions to portray innocent young people as terrorists, but steadfastly refuses to fund needed drug treatment for the millions of men women and

children who need it in America today.

The latest federal anti-drug ads run alongside spots for Zoloft™ and Taster's Choice™ during family movies. It's no wonder that children are confused about drugs.

Lynn M. Paltrow may be contacted by email at:  
[LMPNYC@aol.com](mailto:LMPNYC@aol.com).  
For more online information:  
[www.advocatesforpregnantwomen.org](http://www.advocatesforpregnantwomen.org)

## Dan Burton, continued from page 1

where they are getting their money.

I mean that there is no question. A kid can be driving a brand-new Corvette when he lives in the inner city of Indianapolis in a ghetto. You know that he has gotta be making that money in some way that is probably not legal and probably involves drugs.

Over seventy percent of all crime is drug-related. And you alluded to that today. We saw on television recently Pablo Escobar gunned down and everybody applauded and said, "that's the end of the Medellin cartel," but it wasn't the end. There is still a cartel down there. They are still all over the place. When you kill one, there's ten or twenty or fifty waiting to take his place. You know why? It's because of what you just said a minute ago, Mr. Carr, Mr. Marcocci. And that is that there is so much money to be made in it, and there is always going to be another person in line to make that money.

And we go into drug eradication and we go into rehabilitation and we go into education, and we do all of these things... And the drug problem continues to increase. And it continues to cost us not billions, but trillions of dollars. Trillions! And we continue to build more and more prisons, and we put more and more people in jail, and we know that the crimes—most of the time—are related to drugs.

So I have one question I would like to ask all of you, and I think this is a question that needs to be asked. I hate drugs. I hate people who succumb to drug addiction, and I hate what it

does to our society. It has hit every one of us in our families or friends of ours. But I have one question that nobody ever asks, and that is this question: What would happen if there was no profit in drugs? If there was no profit in drugs, what would happen. If they couldn't make any money out of selling drugs, what would happen?

Carr: I would like to comment. If we made illegal... what you are arguing then is complete legalization?

Dan Burton: No, I am not arguing anything. I am asking the question. Because we have been fighting this fight for thirty to forty years and the problem never goes away...

Well I don't think that the people in Colombia would be planting coca if they couldn't make any money, and I don't think they would be refining coca and heroin in Colombia if they couldn't make any money. And I don't think that Al Capone would have been the menace to society that he was if he couldn't sell alcohol on the black market, and he did, and we had a horrible, horrible crime problem. Now the people are producing drugs in Southeast Asia and Southwest Asia and Colombia and everywhere else. They don't do it because they like to do it. They don't fill those rooms full of money because they like to fill them full of money. They do it because they are making money. At some point we have to look at the overall picture, and I am not saying that

there are not going to be people who are addicted. There is going to have to be education and rehabilitation and all of those things that you are talking about—but one of the parts of the equation has never been talked about because politicians are afraid to talk about it.

This is my last committee hearing as Chairman. Last time! And I thought about this and thought about this, and thought about this. And one of the things that ought to be asked is—what part of the equation are we leaving out? And is it an important part of the equation? And that is the profit in drugs. Don't just talk about education. Don't just talk about eradication. Don't just talk about killing people like Escobar, who is going to be replaced by somebody else. Let's talk about what would happen if we started addressing how to get the profit out of drugs.

**EVENT:** House Government Reform Committee  
See it online at: [http://video.c-span.org:8080/ramgen/ldrive/e121202\\_heroin.rm](http://video.c-span.org:8080/ramgen/ldrive/e121202_heroin.rm) (Advance to 1 hour and 18 minutes into the broadcast for Burton's and other's remarks.)

**AGENDA:** Full committee hearing on "America's Heroin Crisis, Colombian Heroin and How We Can Improve Plan Colombia."

**WHO:** Felix Jimenez, former special agent in charge, New York Field Division, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA); Tony Marcocci, detective, District Attorney's Office, Westmoreland County, PA; Scott Pelletier, detective sergeant, Portland Police Department, ME; Matt Undercover narcotics detective, Howard County Police Department, MD; Tom Carr, director, Baltimore-Washington High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area; Barry Crane, deputy director, Supply Reduction, Office on National Drug Control Policy; Paul Simons, acting assistant secretary, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, State Department; Rogelio Guevara, chief of operations, DEA; Adam Lassan, senior associate, Center for International Policy

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES  
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### My Contact Information (non-prisoner):

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City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip +4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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- I want to sponsor my imprisoned loved one's membership and have enclosed an additional \$6.00.  
 I am a prisoner. I have enclosed at least \$6.00/ or made arrangements for payment.

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Prison \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_

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The November Coalition Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; your donations are tax deductible and appreciated!

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For fifty-one years, I said to the world, "I can do it." Even though I walked with crutches and a leg brace because of polio, I was editor of the college newspaper and was vice-president of my fraternity. I married, taught high school English, adopted two children, was promoted to district curriculum coordinator, and was a high school principal. In 1997, my doctor and three other physicians diagnosed Post Polio Syndrome, and I was forced to retire from a job I loved. I thought my world had fallen apart, but it wasn't until a year ago that I realized that my permanent disability was insignificant. A year ago, our son was sentenced to Yankton, SD Federal Prison Camp because of a drug law violation.

A low-level, non-violent, first-time offender, he was given 110 months. His sentence was not much less than a man who had already "done time" and was far from being a low-level offender, but he had names and stories that he could trade to reduce his sentence. Our son was a "low man on the totem pole" and had nothing to give to obtain relief. Was this the intent of the lawmakers who passed the legislation under which our son was sentenced, to the Mandatory Minimum Sentencing Laws?

During the past year, our son has completed a college course and is enrolled in two others. He is involved with the Choices program, works with the chapel's music department, regularly attends mass, has attended two inmates' baptisms, reads and writes letters for an inmate whose English language proficiency is lacking, attends and has conducted weekly NA meetings, and has been accepted as a participant in the DAP (Drug Assistance Program) prior to his release. But, because of the "no parole for federal prisoners" law, all of those activities must be their own reward; they will not be even considered for a supervised release.

I am no longer able to walk with my crutches for any distance and must use a wheelchair. Many of the activities that I once was able to perform have been lost to me. My son is sorely missed. I could certainly use his assistance as I did during the time after he was sentenced and he self-surrendered, exactly one year ago on St Valentine's Day.

Monthly we travel to Yankton from our home in Council Bluffs, nearly a three-hour drive. We see that our son is not the person he was before he went to five weeks of drug treatment and then to prison. He has taken back his life. Drugs no longer control him. Still he must spend his time in a federal prison camp, as my wife and I struggle to maintain some semblance of the life we once knew.

Mr. President, I urge your support of proposals to reinstate parole for federal prisoners, to repeal the Mandatory Minimum Sentencing law, and to remember your statement that the War on Drugs was "the worst public policy failure of the 1990s." I read in the newspaper that you have plans to reduce the use of illegal drugs by 25% over the next five years. I applaud your efforts, but I plead for the thousands and thousands of men and women who are incarcerated at the present time. Can't you do something to speed up the process so that they can return to society, stay clean, and contribute to our country rather than costing millions of dollars each year?

In a time when our country is suffering economically, we continue to devote so many, many dollars to keeping men and women behind bars; men and women who were perhaps misguided but have now been rehabilitated and are ready to resume their responsible places in the world. They have been punished. Let them get on with living.

A majority of Americans are in agreement that far, far too many men and women are serving lengthy sentences. They have said that alternatives to incarceration must be found.

You speak often of compassion. My son and his family are begging for compassion from a government that cares about all of its citizens.

Sincerely,  
Lawrence J. Schulenberg



# Sentencing Project finds most drug war prisoners are non-violent and non-white

In a new report released in late September, "Distorted Priorities: Drug Offenders in State Prisons," the Sentencing Project has found that most convicted, illegal drug users in state prisons are black males with no history of violence or major drug dealing. More than half of the 251,000 people held in state prisons for drug offenses in 1997, when the last federal five-year survey of state inmates was made, had no history of violence, the report found.

About 124,885 state prisoners were serving sentences for nonviolent drug crimes without any high-level drug dealing involvement, and more than half of them were black. Blacks represented 56% of all drug prisoners, even though they make up only 13% of monthly drug users, the Sentencing Project reported. Hispanics made up 23% of state drug offenders, while making up only 9% of all monthly drug users. Thus, non-whites made up nearly four-fifths of all imprisoned drug offenders while being responsible for only slightly more than one-fifth of all monthly drug use.

The states paid about \$5 billion to house the quarter-million drug offenders in state prisons in 1997, the study found. "They represent a pool of appropriate candidates for diversion to treatment programs or some other type of community-based sanctions," the authors wrote of the nonviolent drug offenders. "The 'war on drugs' has been overly punitive and costly and has diverted attention and resources from potentially more constructive approaches."

See [http://www.sentencingproject.org/news/distorted\\_priorities.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/news/distorted_priorities.pdf) to read the report online.

## Report from Harm Reduction Conference

BY CAIT TRAINOR CALLEN—NOVEMBER COALITION, SEATTLE, WA

*The following is an abstract I delivered at the Harm Reduction Coalition 4th National Conference in Seattle, December 2002:*

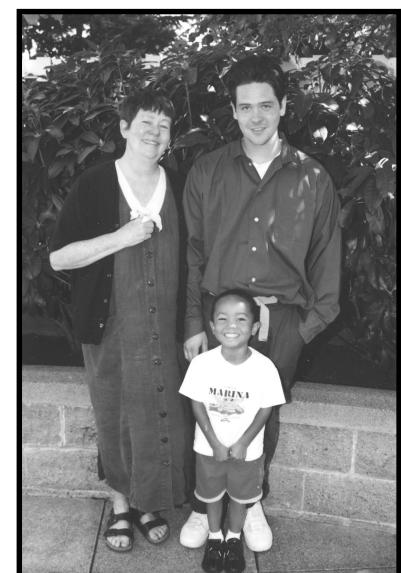
**O**n October 21, 2000, our 23 year-old son Cormac's 57-month sentence for a nonviolent first-offense set the stage for the deaths of his father, Liam, and his partner, Tina. Both were victims of a head-on collision, while returning from a visit with Cormac at FPC Sheridan, a minimum security Federal Prison Camp on the infamous Highway 18 in Oregon. Three-year old JaShawn, the only survivor in the car, escaping the crash with a seat belt burn on his neck, lost two of the three most important people in his world, his mom and grandfather, who had been providing a home for him.

As of this date, despite the best efforts of family, lawyers, friends, even the Archbishop of Portland, who wrote in support of Cormac's appeal for commutation of sentence, this administration continues to deprive my grandson of his only surviving parent.

I wish to explore, as highlighted in my son's case, disproportionality in sentencing, prosecutorial ignorance in the area of mental health, questionable BOP policies relative to the administration of the DAP Program and the District Court Judge's thinking regarding Apprendi and my son's §2255 petition. These issues underlie those crucial decisions made by the authorities in my son's case, decisions which, in my opinion, implicate me in the destruction of my own family through the inappropriate use of my tax dollars.

My presentation was sandwiched between Ethan Nadelmann of the Drug Policy Alliance, a researcher from Russia, and other notables. I had an 18 by 24-inch poster of Cormac, JaShawn and myself.

Was I nervous? You bet, but my voice didn't shake and thanks to an audience member's question I was able to give out the e-mail address of the November Coalition and introduce the petition which I then circulated in time to catch a few names before the meeting broke up.



*The Callen Family*

## Michigan legislature repeals mandatory sentencing laws

**O**n December 12, 2002 a bipartisan majority in the Michigan Senate voted in favor of three reform bills — HB 5394, HB 5395, and HB 6510 — that "eliminate most of the state's Draconian mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses," according to a news release from Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM). The passage of these three bills "allows judges to impose sentences based on a range of factors in each case, rather than drug weight only, and replaces lifetime probation for the lowest-level offenders with a five-year probationary period."

Rep. Bill McConico (D-Detroit) sponsored the bills. "This major step brings fairness back to the judicial system in Michigan. We were able to unite Republicans, Democrats, prosecutors, judges and families in the common cause of sentencing justice. Now we can reunite families, reallocate resources and allow judges to do their job," said a jubilant McConico. Diverse professional groups — including the Detroit Branch of the NAACP, the Michigan Catholic Conference, Michigan's Children, and the Michigan Association of Drug Court Professionals — supported the bills.

The reforms not only allow for increased judicial discretion at sentencing but also bring back parole for some prisoners. Criminal justice professionals, including judges and prosecutors, hailed the new reforms as the return of a "responsible" approach that properly fits a sentence to the crime and which now will allow judges

and drug court professionals a creative, cost-effective latitude in designing sentences.

"Michigan's prosecutors recognize that an effective drug policy is a combination of criminal justice strategies, readily available drug treatment programs, incarceration where appropriate, and prevention activities in schools, businesses and homes," said a supportive David Morse, president of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan. Former Michigan Governor William G. Milliken

campaigned for the repeal of mandatory minimum laws, calling his 1978 signing of their enabling legislation the "worst mistake of my career" in office.

While being hailed for the victory, FAMM's Executive Director

Laura Sager gave credit elsewhere, "Today is the culmination of years of grassroots lobbying efforts by thousands of our members affected by mandatory minimums that were among the harshest in the nation. These families brought the human face of sentencing injustices to lawmakers and convinced members of both parties that change was urgently needed."

Particular credit for this 'grassroots lobby' effort should also go to the National Lawyers Guild of Michigan, the Drug Policy Forum of Michigan, U of M Students for Sensible Drug Policy and Detroit's Coalition for Compassionate Care for doing what it takes at every step of the way to build popular support for legislation that serves people.

## Panel Discussion, Wesleyan Law School, Middletown, CT—10/21/02



# November Coalition Roadshow Hits East Coast

BY PHIL SMITH, THE WEEK ONLINE WITH DRCNET, Nov 1, 2002

The Journey for Justice, the November Coalition's cross-country journey to organize around ending drug war injustice, has roared out of the Midwest, hit the prisons of upstate New York and the mean streets of New Haven, barreled into New York City and Philadelphia, and by the time the Week Online hits your mailbox today will be in front of the White House, sending the message direct to the man who lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Co-sponsored by Common Sense for Drug Policy and aided and abetted by a panoply of local and national groups along the way, the Journey has been an organizer's eye-opener, said November Coalition leader Nora Callahan. "This has been a real learning experience," she told DRCNet, "and what we've been learning is that the best way to organize these communities is to shut up and listen and let the people stand and lead."

That's what happened at a forum in New Haven, where more than 100 people turned out for a Journey forum and dozens of young people spontaneously joined a march between three of the city's prisons. "I'm seeing tremendous changes with the people," said Clifford Thornton of the drug reform group Efficacy, who played a key role in organizing New Haven events for the Journey. "They're sick and tired of this mess."

One of the people involved was Sally Joughin of the Connecticut group People Against Injustice. "We've been working on a number of different criminal justice reform projects," said Joughin, "we knew the November Coalition was coming, and it just made sense to work together," she told DRCNet. "We don't want any more prisons in Connecticut and we know that the drug war is causing prison overcrowding. Drug possessors and low level sellers don't need to be there," she said.

People Against Injustice is attempting to work with other, public health-oriented groups on the drug war issue, said Joughin. "We'll see how we can connect," she said. "And the Journey provided us with new connections and renewed old ones. We haven't done a project specific to the drug war for awhile and now we're talking about it again."

Thornton agreed that the Journey events had been a catalyst. "The next day I got three calls from different people wanting to do more forums," he said. "We're trying to set up one with a

group of middle and high school students and let them run it. We'll advise, that's all."

"That's the idea", said The November Coalition's Chuck Armsbury. "We've noticed in our travels how quick people are to bemoan their circumstances and say 'look what they're doing to us,'" he noted. "It is difficult to empower people, but we have to tell them it is time to stop begging and start demanding that these injustices stop."

And the Journey is allowing Callahan and Armsbury, along with frequent guest Kevin Zeese of Common Sense for Drug Policy, to learn from successful groups and pass on that knowledge as the Journey continues. "We went from New Haven to Brooklyn," said

Callahan, "and with each stop we acquire more things that we can pass on. The things people have done to get New Haven active can be applied in Brooklyn, or Wilmington, or anywhere," she said.

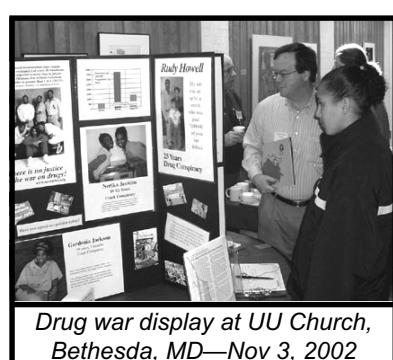
It hasn't been all roses, though, Callahan said. She and Armsbury spent some lonely hours all by themselves at prison vigils in upstate New York and Pennsylvania. "The black people from the city are afraid of these small, all-white towns," she said. "They come to visit and then they leave. They don't stay here overnight. They've heard stories." And prison officials haven't been particularly accommodating, she added. "At some of these prisons, there is no place to stand and vigil, and if we move onto private property, the Bureau of Prisons calls the owner and has him run us off." They might have to negotiate with the BOP in the future, she said.

But she stays fresh, Callahan said. "I meet with these people and it revives me," she said.

"I was listening to a group of women in Brooklyn led by November Coalition member Teresa Aviles and it struck me how the people most left behind are the women. As a movement, we haven't really grasped the impact of taking away these women's husbands, brothers, fathers, sons," she said. "But we had a banquet of delicious homemade food, a time of sharing, and we'll probably see more workshops come out of it. This keeps me going."

She probably needed some of that warm glow of solidarity in Philadelphia evening as she and Armsbury and a handful of others stood in the freezing rain outside the Philadelphia House of Detention. Maybe the prisoners inside pounding on the windows in gratitude helped. But that was only one of the Philadelphia events, which were largely organized by the Tri-State Drug Policy Forum's Diane Fornbacher along with assistance from the Temple University National Lawyers Guild. Fornbacher, Zeese, Callahan, and Armsbury also appeared at a forum at Temple's Beasley Law School.

And today (November 1) it's Washington, DC, where the Journey will join forces with District drug policy reformers in a White House demonstration decrying the differential treatment accorded to the drug-using children of the politically powerful and calling for an end to drug war injustice in any form. After that, the Journey turns West, rolling into the prison country of Appalachia, Michigan, and the Dakotas before Callahan and Armsbury return to their home north of Spokane to plot the next phase of the Journey for Justice. "We're heading south next time," said Callahan. "If you live in Georgia, Florida, or the Carolinas, give us a call. It's time to put your town on the map."



Drug war display at UU Church, Bethesda, MD—Nov 3, 2002

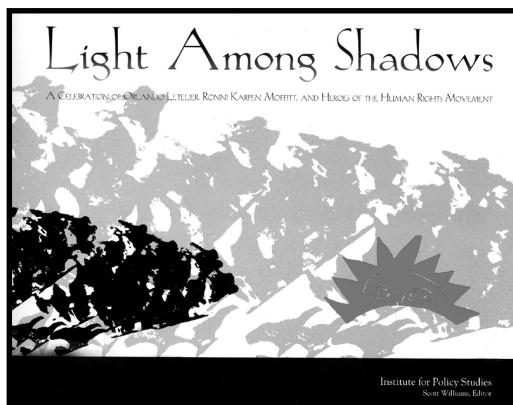


November Coalition meeting, Brooklyn, New York—Oct 26, 2002

"THIS HAS BEEN A REAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE, AND WHAT WE'VE BEEN LEARNING IS THAT THE BEST WAY TO ORGANIZE THESE COMMUNITIES IS TO SHUT UP AND LISTEN AND LET THE PEOPLE STAND AND LEAD."—NORA CALLAHAN



Discussion group at St. Luke's Church forum, New Haven, CT—Oct 22, 2002



In October 2000, The November Coalition received the Letelier-Moffitt award in Washington, DC from the Institute for Policy Studies. The award honors Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt, two IPS colleagues who were killed by agents of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1976.

The book *Light Among Shadows; a celebration of Orlando Letelier, Ronni Moffitt and heroes of the human rights movement*, is available from The Institute for Policy Studies at [www.ips-dc.org](http://www.ips-dc.org) or write IPS, 733 15th Street NW, Suite 1020, Washington, DC, 20005-2112. Ph: 202-234-2382, Email: [publications@ips-dc.org](mailto:publications@ips-dc.org) Cover price \$25.00

From the book:

"Love and honor all people who suffer under repression. Know one's deeper motives for doing this work, and continue to study history from diverse views. Be prepared for sacrifice of old ways of thinking and doing, and stay flexible ideologically. Identify white superiority as a dynamic feature of racist repression driving foreign and domestic policy. Act as if there will be no tomorrow, as if humanity hangs in the balance, and be scrupulously honest and scientific in consideration of developing new support for the human rights movement. Wherever you may live, be involved in your government." —Nora Callahan, Executive Director, The November Coalition

## Medical marijuana campaign heats up

Medical marijuana users, grower/providers and their supporters served notice to the Bush administration, the Justice Department and the DEA on June 6, 2002 that the federal government's war on medical marijuana in the states will not be uncontested.

DEA offices and other federal buildings hosted a variety of protests, direct actions and civil disobedience in some 55 cities across the country. Arrests occurred in San Francisco and Washington, DC. The demonstrations, organized by Americans for Safe Access (ASA), a campaign of the Cannabis Action Network, told the DEA to "cease and desist" from persecuting medical marijuana patients and providers in those states where voters have opted for medical use.

In other cities such as Portland (OR), Seattle, San Antonio, Wichita, Tampa, Rock Island (IL) and Saginaw (MI) activists set up picket lines, public rallies and 'banner drops' in highly visible locations. The single largest demonstration was in Santa Rosa (CA) where more than 300 people showed up to protest DEA raids there the previous week.

Federal authorities responded in the weeks following by breaking the 'first rule of holes' — when you're in one, stop digging! Without evident shame or awareness, the aggressive federal offensive targeting medical marijuana providers, growers and patients in California has only energized common citizens and elected officials alike in support. A raid September 5th against the Santa Cruz Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM) may mark the beginning of a real anti-federal mobilization of public indignation in California. On September 12th the DEA struck again, this time raiding the Genesis medical marijuana dispensary in Petaluma and an associated garden in Sebastopol.

Santa Cruz residents approved Proposition 215, the 1996 medical marijuana initiative, by a 74% margin. In 2000, the city council approved an ordinance allowing medical marijuana to be grown and used without a prescription. "It's just absolutely loathsome to me that federal money, energy and staff time would be used to harass



The DEA descends on WAMM

would put WAMM under the provisions of a federal law stating a person can't be sued for having a controlled substance if he or she is carrying it while "enforcing" local drug laws.

"While the country was on 'orange alert' on September 11, 30 DEA agents were busily plotting an attack on the medical marijuana community. President Bush warned us of an attack, but he didn't tell us it would be from our own government," said ASA executive director Steph Sherer. More protests were held on September 23rd at the sentencing hearing for convicted medical marijuana grower Bryan Epis, who received a 10-year federal mandatory minimum prison sentence.

California's political class is slowly mobilizing in support of the state's medical marijuana law while editorial page writers chime in to denounce the raids. With medical marijuana supporters and their allies taking to the streets, the federal government may have finally found the confrontation it has been so resolutely seeking.

(Source: DRCNet's *The Week Online*)



Kevin Zeese, President of Common Sense for Drug Policy arrested in DC

# Hispanic activist shows how it's done

Esteban L. Cuevas from Tampa Bay, FL wrote to say he has contacted a young person and his two aunts who have taken interest in the November Coalition's efforts seeking justice for the drug war's federal prisoners. "They have a blood relative in a federal prison and are interested in knowing more about H.R. 5296 and are willing to help with their modest assistance," Cuevas wrote.

On his own initiative and using Coalition information, Esteban has begun organizing a 'community committee' to write members of Congress representing Tampa Bay citizens about the need for legislation such as H.R. 5296.

In his own words Esteban said, "I did form the committee, chaired by me, with 10 members of wives, other relatives and friends of current federal inmates. I prepared a letter for the committee, using the November Coalition's guidelines, which was signed by each member. It was mailed to the four U.S. representatives on November 2, 2002. Only one has responded as of this date. A follow up letter was sent to those that have not responded to this date."

Cuevas concluded, "The Congressperson who responded to our committee's letter was appreciative of our concerns and showed that he is very well aware of the H.R. 5296 Bill and briefly went on explaining the process of enacting the Bill. He also stated that he would discuss the Bill with his House colleagues. His letter was very enlightening to me. He is a Republican and was re-elected for the third time to Congress with a 71% margin. His son was elected to the Florida Legislature with a 84% margin."

Esteban's plea in Spanish on this page calls on drug war victims and concerned citizens in Hispanic communities to rally behind the Petition for Relief from Drug War Injustice. Esteban also translated the introduction and punctuated the other Spanish writing seen here. Hats off to this enthusiastic and creative volunteer in the fight to end drug war injustice.

## Mensaje de urgencia a todos los Latinos en prisiones federales

POR: ESTEBAN LUIS CUEVAS

La Coalicion Noviembre (November Coalition) una organizacion sin fines de lucro, la que publica este periodico llamado; The Razor Wire (Alambre De Pua) ha comenzado una campana nacional a lo ancho y largo de este pais, para exijir justicia por los presos que cumplen largas e injustas sentencias mandatorias por delitos no violentos relacionado con el consumo, adiccion, venta o el trafico de drogas ilegales. Estas leyes injustas de sentencias mandatorias son resultado de la mal llamada "Guerra Contra Las Drogas", la cual no ha resuelto absolutamente nada, excepto que ha causado el innecesario sufrimiento no solo del recluso, sino de sus esposas, padres, familiares y muy en particular sus hijos. (De estos, les podia contar tantas historias tristes) Sin embargo, su delito y encarcelacion genera miles de millones de dolares para la "gran industria del crimen". (Policias, incubiertos, fiscales, abogados defensores(?), jueces, guardias

penales, etc, etc; ademas de los costos de alimentacion, servicios medicos y dentales, etc, ect. !! Es un negocio tan lucrativo que ya estan privatizando las prisiones al extremo que ya estas empresas privadas aparecen en la Bolsa De Valores de N.Y!!

Como sabran, ustedes los presos en prisiones federales no tienen derecho a la libertad provisional, (Parole) pues este derecho Constitucional fue abolido por ley durante los mediados de los años 1980. De aqui es donde quiero artir para convencerlo a que nos ayude en ayudarlo a usted.

La Coalicion Noviembre, en su campana nacional esta solicitando las firmas de ciudadanos en general en apoyo a la restauracion de la ley de libertad provisional (Parole) para los convictos en casos no violentos de drogas ilegales en prisiones federales. Como parte de esta campana nacional, esta organizacion en su "Jornada por la Justicia", estara visi-tando para fines de enero de 2003, varias ciudades del estado de Florida para dar conferencias y hacer manifestaciones publicas para llamar la atencion del publico sobre la injusta "Guerra Contra las Drogas".

Si usted se considera victim de las injusticias de la "Guerra Contra Las Drogas", entonces es un deber de suma importancia que usted ayude a su posible temprana excarcelacion. ¿Como hacerlo?

1. Escribirle a sus seres queridos y a sus amigos para que firmen la Peticion del November Coalition, solicitando la restauracion de la ley de libertad provisional a los reclusos en prisiones federales y ponerle fin a la injusta "Guerra Contra Las Drogas". Estas firmas le daran un fuerte poder a esta organizacion para exijir justicia en voz alta y dura ante los lideres politicos y civiles de este pais y ante los foros de comunicacion masiva.

Ademas, pedirle a sus familiares y amigos para que cada uno tambien soliciten firmas entre sus respectivos familiares y amigos. !Esto es muy Importante! ( Si me llaman al (813)988-4395, les puedo facilitar a sus familiares o amigos la solicitud para obtener las firmas.)

2. Pedirle a sus familiares y amigos a que participen activamente en la "Jornada por la Justicia", programada para los fines de enero del 2003, en varias ciudades de Florida. Para informacion sobre fechas y lugares, sus familiares o amigos, deben llamar al: (509) 684-1550. .... Por el internet: [www.journeyforjustice.org/archive.html](http://www.journeyforjustice.org/archive.html)

3. Pedirle a sus familiares mas llegados a que formen un "Comite de Ciudadanos" compuesto de 10 o mas miembros de su vencidad para enviarle una carta a los Congresista de sus distrito electoral federal, solicitando que apoyen la restauracion de la ley de libertad provisional y el fin a la injusta "Guerra Contra Las Drogas". (Si me llaman al (813)988-4395, les puedo facilitar una copia para que le sirva como guia.)

4. Que le pidan a sus familiares a que lo subsciban a este periodico; "The Razor Wire", para que reciban un ejemplar trimestral. (Solo les costara \$6.00 al año) (Si me llaman al (813)988-4395, les puedo facilitar una solicitud para su subscpcion) Amigo Latino, todo lo arriba mencionado lo hice yo por solicitud de un amigo preso, quien tanto el, como su familia, estan hoy sufriendo las duras consecuencias de las injusticias de la "Guerra Contra Las Drogas". Si mi amigo lo hizo, usted tambien puede hacerlo. !!Hagalo hoy mismo!! !!Apoye la organizacion November Coalition!!

## Revista sobre el proceso de Justicia criminal ahora accesible en Espanol

Lo que sigue es una revista hecha por Gerardo Antonio Urrego, del manual escrito por David Zapp; "Sentencias y Leyes Federales de Narcotrafico y Lavado de Dinero", el cual el Sr. Urrego, llama como "indispensable" para los presos de habla hispana detenidos en carceles, prisiones y otras facilidades de detenciones en los E.U.

David Zapp es un abogado defensor especializado en casos criminales con mas de 25 años de experiencia. Es miembro del Bar en New York y New Jersey y ejerce su oficio en todos los estados de E.U. y el distrito de Puerto Rico.

El Señor Zapp es de origen panameño y habla el español con fluides. Es graduado de la Universidad de Columbia-Colegio de Artes Liberales y de la Universidad de Columbia-Escuela de Leyes.

Los prisioneros, sus seres queridos y demas interesados que puedan usar este libro, pueden solicitar y recibir una copia GRATIS de "Sentencias y Leyes Federales de Narcotrafico y Lavado de Dinero" escribiendo a:

Zapp Manual c/o The November Coalition  
795 South Cedar, Colville, WA 99114.

## Sentencias y Leyes Federales de Narcotrafico y Lavado de Dinero

AUTOR - DAVID ZAPP, ED. 2001-2002

COMENTARIO BY GERARDO ANTONIO URREGO

Sentarse en el banquillo de los acusados para enfrentar las acusaciones de un fiscal de los Estados Unidos de America, es una de las experiencias mas traumáticas de la vida para cualquier ser humano. Y si este infeliz es un ciudadano cuya lengua materna es el idioma español, entonces el trauma deja de ser trauma para convertirse en una verdadera "pesadilla jurídica."

En honor a la verdad, ¿cuantos de los acusados hispanos que han enfrentado un juicio criminal verdaderamente han entendido lo que esta pasando dentro de la Corte? La gran mayoria de estos acusados se convierten en verdaderos "convidados de piedra," dependiendo exclusivamente de la buena voluntad de un traductor afanado y de un abogado que siempre esta mirando el reloj para atender otros clientes mas remunerativos. En otras palabras, los hispanos, cuando estan acusados en un juicio criminal, dependen mas de la misericordia de Dios que de la eficacia de las personas que supuestamente deberian ayudarles (el abogado defensor y el traductor de oficio).

Por todo esto, el libro "Sentencias y Leyes Federales de Narcotrafico y Lavado de Dinero" del abogado David Zapp, es una guia obligada para todos los hispanos y deberia ser un libro permanente de consulta en todas las librerias de los centros de detencion. Lo unico que debe hacer el inmigrante es saber leer y tener el tiempo y la voluntad de dedicarse a leer, con calma, el capitulo del libro que se aplique a su caso en particular. Es una traducion excelente y bien leida, puede significar una diferencia fundamental en el termino final de la sentencia.

El libro explica todo lo referente a los beneficios de declararse culpable, de como presentar esa aceptacion de culpabilidad a tiempo para conseguir no dos, sino tres o cuatro niveles menos en las ofensas, asi como tambien indica cuantos niveles una persona puede recibir si ha tenido antecedentes criminales, la historia criminal, los atenuantes del delito, y muy importante, el nivel que le corresponde de acuerdo a la cantidad de drogas incautadas. De igual manera, y tambien de sumo interes, el acusado puede enterarse que nivel le corresponderia de acuerdo a su participacion en el crimen, todo lo cual juega un papel fundamental en el momento de entrar a negociar con el fiscal una opcion de culpabilidad.

Si el acusado esta verdaderamente preocupado por su situacion legal y se dedica a leer y entender este Manual de Pautas o "Sentencing Guidelines" en ingles, entonces el tendra una mejor perspectiva de lo que esta pasando en la corte donde la felicidad del acusado se debate en un idioma extraño y rodeado tambien de gente extraña que siempre esta mirando el reloj y nunca el mejor interes del indefenso inmigrante. Esa condicion de desventaja puede al menos superarse cuando el hispano lee, pregunta y enfrenta la opinion del abogado con lo que aprende en su lectura de este libro.

Por todo lo anterior, considero que este libro debe ser una fuente obligada de consulta para todos los acusados cuya lengua materna sea el español, y deberia pedirselo a las autoridades respectivas de cada centro de detencion que lo tengan en sus librerias de leyes para la consulta de los interesados. Asi mismo, los hispanos deben preguntar por este libro y pedir que lo consigan si es que donde se hallan detenidos no lo tienen.

## DEA Direct Action Day in Austin

BY KAREN HEIKKALA, DRUG POLICY FORUM OF TEXAS AND NOVEMBER COALITION LEADER

We had a successful time at the DEA's outpost here in Austin, Texas on June 6. In solidarity with approximately 60 cities, we held a press conference calling for the DEA to back off raiding the medical cannabis clubs that serve the sick and vulnerable in those states that have legalized marijuana use for medical purposes.

The TV and radio reporters were very interested, and all local channels came out. Tracey Hayes, who is the coordinator for the Safe Access chapter in Austin, did a great job and also did two live radio interviews, one from Dallas and another at KLBJ AM in Austin. KTRH news radio from Houston was at the press conference.

In addition to Tracey Hayes from Safe Access, Noelle Davis read a public record statement from Rep. Dogett, in which he vowed to continue opposing Federal interference, believing this decision is better left to the states. Zeal Steffenoff, who is a medical cannabis patient; and myself as a Licensed Vocational Nurse in the state of Texas also did separate interviews.

KVUE-TV-ABC stayed with us when all of us tried to go upstairs to see the DEA agents and explain our concerns as well as hand them our Truce Statement. Though the DEA men were there, they wouldn't answer the buzzer placed in the lobby, and there was no way to even get to their front door.

OUR tax money apparently pays for them to have an office that is totally inaccessible to the public. The property manager told us he hasn't even been to the third floor where the DEA office is. The elevator only goes to the 2nd and the same for the stairs. The same property manager kindly said he would see that the DEA got our Truce paper.

On the way out of the building we could see someone from the DEA standing behind the framed clouded glass that is the 3rd floor. We couldn't really see in, but they were looking down at us and I'm sure could see out.

As part of this action, a billboard was made and displayed near Highway 71 by the airport which reads, "Arrest Pain, Not Potsmokers, and their Caregivers" and "Safe Access to Medical Marijuana." Also another group, which hasn't claimed responsibility, put up a banner on the Zilker Park moontower which says MEDICINE with cannabis leaves on it.



# Introducing Police Officers for Drug Law Reform

Police Officers for Drug Law Reform is an organization composed of law enforcement officers both active and non-active who believe that their current role in the War on Drugs is inconsistent with an officer's duty to protect and serve. "Police officers have observed that the last 20 years of current drug policy has neither brought an end or reduction in demand for illegal drugs in our country," says Daniel J. Solano, a retired Detroit Police Officer and Founder of Police Officers for Drug Law Reform, as well as Director of Police Officers Want Marijuana Decriminalized.

"Since my retirement from the Detroit Police Department in 1993, I have observed the escalation in our government's War on Drugs and the continued reliance on police to solve this social issue. A consequence of our current drug policies is reduced public confidence and trust in the police to protect and serve," Solano emphasized in a press release.

Police drug-related corruption cases are now commonplace across the country. The US government has criminalized millions of American citizens, and America now has the dubious distinction of housing more prisoners than any other nation in the world. "We are working to restore public confidence and trust in law enforcement; we also are working to assist our legislators in reforming current drug laws," wrote Solano.

"It's time to think beyond drug prohibition and adopt a more logical and sustainable drug policy—one that is less reliant on police and imprisonment—a policy with greater emphasis on regulation, prevention and treatment,"



Officer Solano

Police corruption, Solano argues, "has gone from a mutual agreement between cop and crook to one of personal gain for the officers' benefit and differs from 'traditional police corruption' usually involving a mutually beneficial arrangement between criminals and police officers; for example, the former offered the latter bribes in exchange for immunity from arrest."

By contrast, Solano points out, several current studies and investigations of drug related police corruption have found on-duty officers engaged in serious criminal activities, such as conducting unconstitutional searches and seizures; stealing money or drugs from drug dealers; selling stolen drugs; protecting drug operations; providing false testimony; and submitting false crime reports.

"Drug prohibition has made police corruption unavoidable and creates inherent incentives for police corruption. The economic incentive alone can make a good officer into a corrupt officer. Police credibility is another casualty of the War on Drugs; how can the police expect citizens to obey the law when the police themselves are partaking in illegal activities," asks Solano in an editorial.

THE WAR ON DRUGS HAS CREATED AND FACILITATES THIS NEW BREED OF CORRUPT COPS WHO ARE WEARING THE BADGE TO COMMIT MURDER, STEAL, AND TERRORIZE THOSE THEY SWORE TO PROTECT. THESE ACTIONS TAKE PLACE ACROSS THE NATION AND ARE NOT CONFINED TO THE BIG CITIES.

Police officers from Philadelphia, for instance, "have been charged with planting drugs on suspects, shaking down drug dealers for hundreds of thousands of dollars, and breaking into homes to steal drugs and cash. The enormous number of police

corruption cases makes clear that the current War on Drugs policies have created widespread and extensive police corruption. The War on Drugs has created and facilitates this new breed of corrupt cops who are wearing the badge to commit murder, steal, and terrorize those they swore to protect. These actions take place across the nation and are not confined to the big cities," wrote Solano.

"Only by ending the War on Drugs will we rid our police forces of drug-related corruption, and only then will the

police regain some lost credibility," he insists.

Dan Solano had much more to add to the mushrooming charges being leveled at the obstinate policymaking drug warriors. Mr. Solano participated in a weekend (October 11-13) of public events and education in Detroit, Michigan as part of our Journey for Justice.

This was a major public education weekend bringing together Rep. John Conyers and other congressional leaders, Kevin Zeese and other national drug reform spokespeople, local activists, interested citizens, media and Nora Callahan with Chuck Armsbury of The November Coalition—all converging in Detroit to launch the first of many Coalition Journeys to end drug war injustice.

Dan J. Solano, President  
Police Officers for Drug Law Reform  
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## War on Drugs does boffo box office



Ethan Hawke and Denzel Washington in Training Day

In *Training Day*, Denzel Washington delivers an intense Oscar-winning performance as Alonzo Harris, a too-far-over-the-edge undercover cop on the elite LAPD inner city narcotics unit. Washington's character alternates between charming and chilling, and finally emerges as a worse threat to public safety than the criminals he's supposed to collar.

Ethan Hawke also received a best supporting award as new rookie partner Jake Hoyt; wide-eyed, idealistic, and wholly unprepared for the harsh reality of the drug war at street level. In the course of a single day, Hoyt learns the unvarnished truth about his partner's

arrogance and corruption. The film is gritty and real, and serves as a perfect indictment of the inherent futility at the heart of drug policy enforcement. This film is rated R for coarse language, drugs and graphic violence.

This hard-hitting drama joins the ranks of such recent studio efforts as the now-classic *Traffic*, *Brokedown Palace*, and Johnny Depp's *Blow*. Popular entertainment, especially feature films, tends to reflect evolving public consciousness, and these movies, while still rare, demonstrate a growing dissatisfaction with America's criminal justice approach to substance use and abuse.

## Lives wasting away in prison camps

By RUTH CARTER, PRISONER OF THE DRUG WAR

I am 45 years of age and had worked since I was 12 years old — until I was arrested on drug charges. I am now serving a 16-year sentence at Pekin Federal Prison Camp for Women.

I cannot believe the lives being wasted at these camps. There are no fences, no walls, lots of intelligent women here, lots of talented women here, lots of mothers here doing anywhere from 5 to 20 years. We obviously are not a danger to society or fences and walls would surround us.

I do not believe that taxpayers are aware of what is going on here. Like I said, I have had a job all my life, and if I would have known that my tax dollars were going to support a place like these camps, I would have had a fit. We do everything here that I would have loved to have done while on the outside. We read when we want, sleep, eat, work out in the gym, watch TV, attend classes.

I'm not trying to say any of us like it here because there is a lot of heartache and pain being separated from our families. The point I'm trying to make is that if we can be here with no fences and no walls, then we could be at home raising our own families and doing community service. We could be putting money into the economy instead of costing the taxpayers money. We could be paying taxes.

It costs taxpayers \$7 million a year just to operate this camp. How many camps are there in the system? There are forty-one Federal Camps and many of them larger than this one. This camp makes \$500,000 a year in commissary spending.

I don't know whose plan helped create these camps, but from what I can tell, it is a moneymaker for the government. From where I stand and observe it doesn't cost \$7 million to run this Pekin Camp, but that's what the government charges the taxpayers.

There has been much talk in the Congress and newspapers about nonviolent offenders being incarcerated. To quote Democrat Roland Burris, a former Attorney General, "Incarceration is for those individuals who have been convicted of heinous crimes and are deemed unfit to participate in our society." If he's right, why can't we be at home doing community service and then if we violate rules, put us on home confinement?

I hardly think people who are sitting in Federal Prison Camps with no walls and no fences are a threat to society, and I think most US voters would agree if polled scientifically. So what's this really about — protecting society, or simply bankrolling forever the careers of government employees habituated to more and more hardworking, taxpayers' money?

It's past time for the people of the United States to just say NO to drug war injustice.

## Journey for Justice—Detroit, MI 10/13/02



November Coalition Chapter, Detroit, MI



Nora with new TNC members

## ATTENTION!

### Trusts, Foundations and Estate Planners

Since 1997 The November Coalition Foundation has devoted itself to 'putting a human face' on all victims of our nation's century-old drug war. Our quarterly newspaper, *The Razor Wire*, is a means of expression for drug war prisoners, their families and other concerned people. We coordinate and stage numerous public events and workshops. We serve as 'information brokers' for national media outlets doing stories related to the drug war, and we have chapters in most states throughout the country. We are a nonprofit organization (a 501(c)(3) public charity) seeking funds from trusts, estates and foundations to continue and expand our programs.

For further information, contact Nora Callahan, The November Coalition Foundation, 795 South Cedar, Colville, Washington 99114, call 509 684-1550 or email: [nora@november.org](mailto:nora@november.org)

# THE WALL

## Nerika Jenkins

Sentenced to 19 1/2 Years—Crack Conspiracy



Prior to September 1996 I was living a normal life, working for two health care agencies and attending Suffolk Community College in Brentwood, New York. One day, the DEA followed me to school, identified themselves and arrested me on the college grounds. After my arrest, I was let out on bond, continued working and attending school, successfully receiving my Associates Degree in Science on June 1, 1997.

The trial was held in the Western District of Virginia and in July of 1997, after two days of deliberation, two co-defendants and I were found guilty. On October 27, 1997, I was sentenced by the same senior judge who sat in during trial. My case consisted of 18 co-conspirators; 14 received plea bargains, and are home or close to it. My mandatory release date is October 2014, which means that I would have served 19 years, 6 months. According to the government, I was the 'Ring Leader's' girlfriend. Due to my unwillingness to cooperate with the government officials, the prosecutor painted an image of me at trial as a "Head Lieutenant" that controlled millions of dollars. Where's the money?

It is ironic that the government indicated that 'the master mind' of this whole conspiracy, my daughter's father, received a life sentence, but after appealing his sentence and winning, he will be home in 2003. Another girlfriend he had is home after almost 4 years served. She cooperated with the government by manipulating and fabricating evidence.

I was only guilty of being the mother of his child. No evidence was presented at trial to prove my guilt besides the government witnesses' testimony and two Western Union money receipts. I have filed almost every motion that is applicable, all to no avail.

My mother and my step-father are both working middle class people. Although separated they have collaborated and put up

over \$18,000 in legal fees. I'm at my last resort for justice and I'm hoping that by the grace of God our nation's drug sentencing will be modified in the near future. Change must take place within the judiciary system to help women in similar situations.

I'm presently incarcerated at the FCI in Danbury, Connecticut, where I've been for approximately four years. I have completed a number of college courses, graduating on May 16, 2001 and received a certificate for completing 30 credits in Legal Research and Business Applications. I have reflected on the choices that I made in the past and during my five years of incarceration. I've learned from my mistakes.

I'm a mother of a 10-year-old daughter whose named is Secoya. She is presently with my mother Irilee, who is a single parent. My mother has been raising her since my incarceration.

I decided to do the paperwork and put in for a Clemency. Even though it may have been too late, I went ahead and did it anyway with the encouragement of my mother and a few inmates who told me it's never too late. "Your paperwork may be one of the last [the President] signs," the inmates said. "Nothing beats a try but a failure."

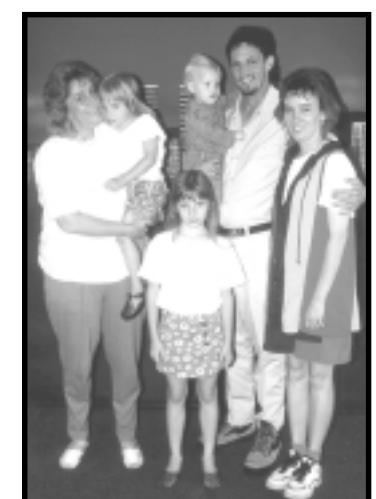
I received a response from the pardon attorney telling me my clemency was denied on March 26, 2002.

I'm not the only one that is dealing with this current situation—more than 80% of the women incarcerated are here because of their boyfriends. The majority of the women played a minor role in the offense and received the same amount of time as myself, or even more. I pray that with our new President in office, he will make some changes in the judiciary system starting with mandatory sentencing. The sentencing guidelines are just too harsh for minor participants, and a change must come.

The 'War on Drugs' is not a war against drugs; it's a war against the people of the United States of America. I don't understand how a person can receive such a long sentence for such a small crime. I did commit a crime—I sold some drugs, but nothing like what I was accused of selling. I was made out to be a kingpin, when in all actuality I was only a small fish. I don't believe I'm actually being punished for the drugs as much as for my silence in the whole matter, and for not testifying for the government.

I have always worked or attended school. Most of the time I've done both. What really concerns me is how the system is so backwards. It's supposed to punish the kingpins instead of the little fish, but that's not what happens. Something's wrong with this picture! We need more treatment and rehabilitation programs, and there are practically none in the federal system. We have a drug class, and they say if you take it you can get up to one year off your sentence, but I've never heard of anyone getting their sentence reduced by more than six months. Besides, it seems to be mostly for informants.

This goes back to the Singleton controversy. Someone cannot offer or promise anything of value for your truthful testimony, except for the government, which can offer you the most valuable thing of all: your freedom. I once thought our government was great and powerful. I almost went into the military to serve it—thank goodness I didn't. Now I only think of the government as a bunch of powerful crooks, because that's all they are! They can do whatever they want to whomever they want. It's one thing to have an informant testify, it's



## James Phillips

34 Years—Cocaine Conspiracy

another thing to tell them what to say, just to give a defendant more time. They couldn't give me time on my past record, because it didn't warrant any enhancements, so instead they raised the drug amount. They had people testifying against me that I didn't even know!

I wish I had known more about these drastic and draconian drug laws. Had I known I would have left the drug game and never looked back. The reason I don't have any children is that when I was sentenced to all this time the woman who was my fiancé at the time had a miscarriage and lost our son. I realize I must be punished for my crime, but why so much punishment for so little crime?

When I was arrested in North Carolina, I had 9.5 grams of cocaine in my front pocket and 2 grams of marijuana. All this will fit in the palm of your hand. Does that warrant 34 years?

## British cops admit smoking pot

By MARK HARRISON, NOVEMBER COALITION CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Answering questions about prior marijuana use on a police department job application form is much different than answering those same questions in an anonymous survey, the Joseph Roundtree Trust Foundation learned from interviews with 150 police officers. Being absolutely

assured their true identities would never reach police headquarters, half of the officers admitted to smoking marijuana in the past. Repeat: 75 out of 150 randomly selected police officers have put other people in jail for doing what they, themselves, have done.

Understandably, 85 percent said they support increased tolerance towards marijuana smokers. Seventy-five percent believe that the drug laws criminalize people who would otherwise have no

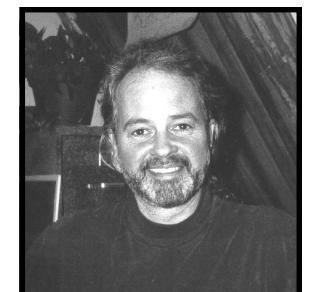
police record, and half believe that current drug laws alienate the police from young people and minorities who might otherwise offer help with more serious crimes.

So what city police department might these candid officers be from, you may wonder. Colville, Washington (local humor)? Crawford, Texas (national humor)? No, of course not. The cops who were honest about past drug use live in another country. In the USA, honesty like that would unleash the FBI, CIA, INS, EPA, FDA and John Ashcroft under the authority of our country's brand new Patriot Act that tracks down patriots just in case they are terrorists who are acting otherwise.

No, these outspoken cops work in South Yorkshire — not Texas, but England — where most officers support the cannabis decriminalization experiment that began last year in the South London district of Lambeth, where 'busted users' are warned, their pot is seized, and then sent on their not-so-merry ways.

The police survey and the success that officers are experiencing in Lambeth — where police resources are spent on solving real crimes with actual victims — provides hard evidence supporting the efforts of Home Secretary David Blunkett to downgrade cannabis from a Class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to a Class C, according to a report last spring in *The (UK) Times*.

(Editor: Mark underwent cancer surgery in December. He will have one more chemotherapy as part of his aftercare. Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers.)



## Busted: Stone Cowboys, Narco-Lords and Washington's War on Drugs

EDITED BY MIKE GRAY (AUTHOR OF *DRUG CRAZY*)



Thirty years ago Richard Nixon called drugs "the modern curse of youth" and launched the modern "War on Drugs" as we know it. Thirty years later, even the conservative *National Review* has said, "The War on Drugs has failed." Spanning three decades, *Busted* tells readers why; charting the violence, chaos, and corruption that the War on Drugs has spawned. It includes frontline reporting from all over the world, literary journalism, public records, and provocative commentary from the left and right. *Rolling Stone*'s P. J. O'Rourke writes, "Marijuana never kicks down your door in the middle of the night. Marijuana never locks up sick and dying people, does not suppress medical research, does not peek in bedroom windows.... Prohibition has done far more harm to far more people than marijuana ever could."

## Camp Meeting, Rapid City, SD—11/18/02





# EYE on CONGRESS

**Patsy Mink continued from page 1**

• H.R. 1978, the Major Drug Trafficking Prosecution Act of 2001, sponsored by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) with 44 cosponsors, would eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for simple possession, distribution, manufacture or importation of drugs. The Waters bill would also require the Attorney General's approval for federal prosecutors to take any drug case.

• H.R. 697, the Crack-Cocaine Equitable Sentencing Act of 2001, sponsored by Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) with three cosponsors, would eliminate some mandatory minimum sentences for crack cocaine offenses.

• H.R. 765, the Safety Valve Fairness Act of 2001, sponsored by Rep. Albert Wynn (D-MD) with 23 cosponsors, would make the 1994 safety valve law retroactive. Under this bill, the courts could apply sentencing guidelines instead of mandatory sentences to drug offenders who meet specified criteria.

• S.B. 1874, the Drug Sentencing Reform Act of 2001, sponsored by Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Jeff Sessions (R-AL), would amend the Controlled Substances Act to decrease the amount of powder cocaine and increase the amount of crack cocaine necessary to trigger mandatory minimum sentences. The bill would also limit sentences for minor players and would establish a pilot program of home detention for certain elderly prisoners.

Both FAMM and the November Coalition criticized the Sessions-Hatch bill for addressing the crack-powder sentencing disparity by increasing powder cocaine penalties. "FAMM doesn't support and can't support the bill because of the way it tinkers with the sentencing ratios," said Pratt, "but there are some good provisions that would address some of those outrageous conspiracy cases we see where girlfriends with minimal involvement get longer sentences than major players. And the fact that two Republican senators introduced the bill is important; they've had a change of heart on mandatory minimums."

November's Callahan wasn't so charitable. "This bill is simply two drug warriors crying about injustice and doing nothing to stop it," she said. "According to the Sentencing Commission, this bill would have provided relief to only 67 prisoners sentenced on crack charges in the last three years."

The November Coalition also has reservations about the Waters bill, Callahan said. "It is not retroactive and wouldn't help anyone already sitting in prison," she said. "And while it is good that it eliminates mandatory minimum sentences except for 'kingpins,' we believe that kingpins are made in the courtroom, not on the street. As long as there is a flourishing black market in banned substances, people will deal in those substances, and as long as a person can take the stand and incriminate others in exchange for his own freedom, petty drug dealers will magically turn into kingpins in the courtroom."

The Rangel bill has the support of both FAMM and the November Coalition, but has been introduced in three

consecutive sessions and gone nowhere, Pratt said. And all of the bills will die at session's end. Still, said Pratt, they can be revived next year. "It is very important for people who support these bills to write their representatives now and let them know the support for reform is out there. Lawmakers tell us that just 25 letters from constituents is enough to make a difference," she said.

It is tough and depressing work, said Pratt, even for lawmakers. "When we have legislators sticking their necks out, we need to support and encourage them. Even Maxine Waters gets discouraged sometimes; she feels like she can't even get support from the constituencies that would benefit the most from her bill. We have to do a better job of letting these folks know we stand behind them. We have to be more strategic in our support of legislation."

Pratt counseled patience and fortitude. "I'm afraid I don't think the laws are going to change that quickly," she said. "Even though mandatory minimums are an issue of fundamental fairness, we still have a lot of work to do in educating the public. People should not lose hope, but they also need to get serious, because change won't happen without their help. People need to take their outrage and turn it into something productive. Our movement has not been effective enough in harnessing this outrage and anger in a way that actually affects the political process," she said.

"The sad thing is that for people working on these issues, in FAMM and in November, the people doing time in prison, the families doing time with them, it just seems impossible sometimes," Pratt continued. "These are dark times, but we have to keep working for a more positive future. And if you look at the history of the US, every social movement for change relied on the people to actually make the difference. We have to rally our people to get out and go to work to make the decision-makers get off their butts," she said.

The November Coalition's Callahan plans to kick some butt herself, she said, adding that the coalition's petition to end drug war injustice is becoming an organizing tool that is drawing in new blood and energizing existing members. The petition, which is not linked to any particular piece of legislation and which asks for some form of early release for drug war prisoners, is designed to show Congress that public support for sentencing reform exists and is growing, she said.

"Our petition will unite an entire federal prison population constituency," Callahan explained. "When you look inside the prisons, you see many people who are redeemable, most of whom are also nonviolent. For them to have no hope of earning early release is inhumane. We have one woman, a physician, sitting in a federal prison camp for seven years while her husband sits at home alone trying to raise three children. How dangerous is she? Well, there are no walls around her prison, yet we're keeping her family and thousands of others divided for no good reason. What's the sense in that?"

## 87,000 students didn't start school this fall

According to new Department of Education data, over 30,000 college students have been denied federal loans and grants for the 2002-2003 school year due to the 1998 Higher Education Act drug provision. Since the HEA drug provision was first enforced in 2000, a total of 86,898 students have been denied aid. A drug conviction is the only crime that can result in the loss of federal financial aid.

"The latest Department of Education statistics confirm that the punitive HEA drug provision remains the number one obstacle for people seeking a higher education," says Shawn Heller, National Director of Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP). "Since African Americans make up half of all people convicted of drug crimes, yet only represent 13% of all drug users, it's evident that this regulation disproportionately punishes minorities."

"Tens of thousands more have likely not bothered to apply for college because they know they won't receive loans or grants. SSDP is working on 500 campuses to end this education disaster," says Heller.

SSDP has 148 officially recognized chapters on college campuses across the country, but the network is expected to grow this fall. "SSDP has experienced phenomenal growth due to a student backlash to the HEA Drug Provision, and we know of students on 350 other campuses who are working to establish new SSDP chapters this fall," says Darrell Rogers, SSDP National Outreach Coordinator.

SSDP organizers are gearing up for protests and civil disobedience this fall to increase public pressure on lawmakers to repeal the HEA drug provision. Amanda Brazel, a senior at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, says, "I believe in equality, freedom, and truth, values that are lost in the war on drugs, values worth working to restore." Brazel knows numerous people who have been impacted by the legislation. "I'm one of those people who thinks I need to stand up and do something about America's un-American war on its own citizens."

In the past couple years, members of Congress have taken notice of the terrible impact the HEA drug provision has had on middle and lower income students. Even the author of the HEA Drug Provision, Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN), asked the Department of Education to find ways to reduce the number of students affected, but the agency has concluded that only congressional action can reduce the huge number of students that are denied a chance to improve their lives.

In a letter sent by the Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform to Congress in May 2002, 41 national education, civil rights and drug policy organizations — including SSDP, the National Education Association, the NAACP, the ACLU, the United States Student Association, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Drug Policy Alliance, the Association for Addiction Professionals, and the National Black Police Association — urged full repeal of the Higher Education Act Drug Provision.

A bill to repeal the drug provision, H.R. 786, has 68 sponsors, but is unlikely to be passed before the 107th Congress dissolves at the end of 2002.

For more information contact Shawn Heller (SSDP) at 202-293-4414 or browse [www.ssdp.org](http://www.ssdp.org) on the web.

## Memories of Paul Wellstone

On the morning of October 25, 2002, a light plane carrying Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN), his wife Sheila and daughter Marcia, three members of his staff and the pilot and co-pilot crashed in a swamp just southeast of Eveleth, Minnesota. There were no survivors.



Sen. Wellstone with Mary Gaines of FedForum and other TNC members at the 2000 Shadow Convention, Philadelphia, PA

Wellstone was known as the "liberal's liberal"; a fiery progressive who was not afraid to buck the system standing up for his high ideals of justice and compassion. His was often the lone dissenting voice in the Senate on matters of business-as-usual policy decisions. He spoke at the Philadelphia Shadow Convention in the summer of 2000 as a vocal opponent of "Plan Columbia"; an ill-advised program of foreign aid and crop eradication in America's never-ending war on drugs. Sen. Wellstone will be sorely missed.



November Coalition - The Razor Wire

## Vigilant in Vegas

BY DEBBIE DEDMON, TNC REGIONAL LEADER

It has been a fast-paced year here in Vegas for the drug war reform movement. This year I became an effective local activist, through networking with others in the reform movement, and made new contacts by getting active in local and state politics. The voter initiative to regulate recreational use of marijuana, Question 9, did not pass, but I learned a lot working on the campaign. The skills I possess now will be used in the future. My thanks to Rob Kampia and MPP for the efforts made on behalf of justice here in Nevada, and the opportunity to learn so much about the political process.

This summer I worked with Rock the Vote as a street team leader. The organization got me into shows, and I registered about 300 people to vote, expanding our contacts in the state. I went on the radio twice and gave speeches statewide, most notably the address to the distinguished League of Women Voters, debating the pro-side of question 9 to them. The November Coalition was also re-introduced to this receptive group of progressive women.

I will be serving as secretary for the Vegas Students for a Sensible Drug Policy next semester, one of the most active student groups in the country. Thirty of us went to the SSDP conference in Anaheim, California in November where I shared a panel with other reform leaders and set up a November Coalition display. I introduced November Coalition to those who would not have known us, and tied it to the idea that love and despair are great motivators, and that our greatest untapped reservoir of potential supporters are family members of drug war prisoners. I talked about how marijuana had been the primary focus for reformers, many of whom think this war stops with 'weed'. I shared with the audience that this focus leaves prisoners of other drugs with little hope, and fewer people advocating for broader reform. I was so proud to represent the

November Coalition, and wore a suit for the occasion. Our reputation preceded me, and more have joined our cause.

Next year there will be more work to reform the Higher Education Act and Sodexo will be challenged — no more options — students do not want to further Sodexo profits, subsidizing private prison construction and we want them off campus. We are having training on how to encourage police to protect our 4th, 5th, and 6th amendment rights. I am also studying my courses, learning everything I can to serve our membership fully.

Vegas leaders will be planning toward the Journey for Justice visit to Vegas in the spring of 2003, when I'll finally meet Chuck and Nora face to face. Face it — I'm in it for the long haul. Thank you for letting me be a part of the November family.

### Forum at Fordham Law School, New York City—Oct 22, 2002



# THE WALL

## Irma Changtin

12 years, 7 months  
Conspiracy and Money Laundering

**A**t trial I learned that my ex-boyfriend had been under investigation for drug trafficking for about four years. Facing a life sentence, he 'cooperated' with the government and was given 20 years. He turned in six of us, among them his own baby's mother, his brother, three others and myself.

I met him in 1994. We became friends and then intimate partners. He was different, intelligent, well groomed, well mannered and friendly with a great sense of humor. I believed him to be trustworthy.

Because I am an accountant, he asked me to prepare his self-employment tax return for 1994 based on his clothing business. During trial, I found out that he used this information to purchase a property for his baby's mother. He also stated during trial that he used my house as a safe place to hide drugs and a gun. According to his testimony, he prepared drugs in the presence of my 12-year-old son and my brother who were both living with me.

In 1997 he asked me if I would sign my name on a car he was planning to purchase because he had some financial problems. Looking back, I wonder why I asked no questions. The transaction only took a few minutes. I trusted him so completely that I did not attempt to read what I was about to sign. The owner and workers from the dealership were extremely friendly, helpful, and the documents were handled efficiently.

Weeks later he asked me to pick up his license plate tags and other related documentation. He said he ran into a problem and had to make a car payment right away. I called the dealership, and was told to make the last car payment. His temporary tags were about to expire, but once payment was made he would get his permanent tags. He didn't have the money to make the last payment, and I offered to make it for him.

He picked me up at work, and before heading to the dealership we stopped at my bank and I withdrew \$1,500. He



took me to the dealership, and I made the final payment on his car. Instead of getting the tags, I was given a business card with instructions to contact a federal agent. Dutifully, I contacted the agent and was told to bring the car in for inspection. My boyfriend drove me to a federal building in Washington, DC where the car was confiscated. I was given an itemized list of property taken from the car along with other documentation.

I contacted a lawyer and was advised not to worry about anything. I attempted to get the car back without success. A week before my trial I was shown evidence that my ex-boyfriend had signed my name at least eight times to purchase other cars. I was in shocked disbelief! At different hearings the prosecutor and my own attorney laughed at me, but I thought their remarks were just part of the whole, strange process.

They raided my house in February 1998. I contracted with three different, incompetent lawyers before federal trial started. My ex-boyfriend was the first government witness who testified against me, and I found that out only when he took the stand against me. I was offered a plea bargain agreement of 34 months, but I could not understand the confusing, contradictory language of the "plea bargain."

Due to my incarceration, I have lost custody of my 15-year-old son, whom I have not seen since 1999. I have no contact with him at all. I have also lost all of my personal property, including my house and car which I obtained working honestly for years. I worked as an account analyst in Georgetown University and believed in an American dream. I had a great life, working at a job I loved and traveling. Now I have only memories of my past life and experiences—the scar of this prosecution and imprisonment will remain with me for the rest of my life.

## Dublin prisoners want relief from drug war injustice

By PENNY S. MOORE

I have been a prisoner at FCI Dublin for six years. I received in my last *Razor Wire* a Petition for Relief from Drug War Injustice. I was so excited.

We have a drug program here in which I am a Mentor, and have been for the last two years. We were scheduled to have class the same night that I received the *Razor Wire* and Petition for Relief; so I went in early and had our drug counselor make copies for me.

At class that night I explained what the November Coalition is about and what we are trying to do. I also passed out a copy of the Petition for everyone in the class and told them to send copies to their families, and have them make more copies.

I also explained that the more signatures we have, the more likely this would happen — RELIEF! There are 35 women in this class, but this is just a start. Did I mention that there are 1,100 women here? I know this: If we try, if we spread the word, the impossible becomes the possible.

(Editor: Yes, turn those 'rumors' of early release into reality with the kind of effort Penny Moore shows here.)

## Eyes were opened

By HUEY BEY, PRISONER OF THE DRUG WAR

**A**bout a month ago our Chaplain, Ms. Valerie Perry, showed us the movie "Guilt By Association." Someone told her that I was active with Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM). She asked me to speak to the inmate audience about FAMM, and in agreeing I also told her about The November Coalition, showing her the letter with the Petition for Relief from Drug War Injustice. So, after I spoke about FAMM to the audience, I told them about TNC and showed them the Petition and a copy of the *Razor Wire*.



Our Chaplain has offered to help us because her eyes were opened by the movie. I play piano and organ for several religious services here at

Yazoo, and everyone here knows me. Every day people confront me and inquire about various literatures and The Petition. I've mailed out about 80 copies, and I'm including three subscription forms with each copy, urging all of their loved ones to support TNC and the national petition campaign for relief from these dead-end sentences.

## Online legal handbook available

If you know someone who is incarcerated and planning on transferring to another state, upon his or her release, you should find this handbook educational and interesting! The Interstate Compact Handbook for the Supervision of Parolees and Probationers is available online at:  
<http://www.pcpaa.net/pubs/Handbook/PPCAA%20Handbook.pdf>

## Nora Callahan and Al Lewis denounce drug war on WBAI radio

**N**ovember Coalition regional leader John Chase of Florida recorded the following live radio conversation between Nora Callahan and 91-year-old Al Lewis (known by many as Grampa Munster in the 1960s television series). The show was live from a Manhattan theater on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. After some fiery opening remarks on current affairs, Lewis turned attention to the drug war and November Coalition's mission. Capitalized words show emphasis by the speaker.

**Al Lewis:** Nora what can we DO?  
**Nora:** Well, the drug war's pretty old now. In the middle '80s the federal government did away with a judge's discretion, which gave all power to prosecutors, and which laid a lot of groundwork for what we see today. It's being asked of Americans to watch your neighbor. WATCH YOUR NEIGHBOR!!

**Al Lewis:** Heh, heh, heh.  
**Nora:** The drug war has eroded all of our civil rights steadily for over thirty years—consistently. We now have in many communities, communities particularly hard hit by drug war prosecutions, a system and culture of betrayal. Sometimes in cities when I'm speaking, a young person will yell out from the audience, "Tell on three, go free!"

What happens? What November Coalition wants our members and other fellow Americans who are standing with us to oppose this so-called war on drugs—it's really just a war on people—to do is to expose the fact that one of the most important things to our society—one of the most important "weaves" is TRUST, and reliance on each other. And in

community after community, particularly the poorest, and we know who those are—the black and brown people -- they're tearing it apart because the only way to save your HIDE if you're caught, or a friend is caught, is to rat on a FRIEND, tell on a FRIEND, roll over on . . . your . . . MOTHER.

And this has to stop, because of what is happening to what once made us great. When I was a child I got WHIPPED for tattling. Now it is the only way to save you from a 40-year-to-life sentence and people . . . will . . . say . . . ANYTHING, because the federal government gets a conviction 97% of the time.

People are going to prison who are INNOCENT because their lawyer set them down and said, "Hey listen, darlin' you go to trial, you gonna do 30 years. You need to just say you did it and do 10."

People call us all the time and we have to tell them, "I'm sorry we have no legal staff, we can't give you legal advice." And they say, "What am I going to do? They're saying that if we don't sign over our property and not fight this forfeiture, they're going to take our home, everything we've worked for." And I tell them, "Well, do you have foster homes to care for your children? What's more important, your home or your children?" And they pack up a few belongings and hit the road. We want our members to start talking about this terrible system of betrayal.

You know, I heard all this when I was a kid and this kind of technique, tell on your neighbor, rolling on a friend, spying on everyone you know . . . callin' the "AUTHORITIES" when there's "SUSPICIOUS activity." That was all tied with another nebulous term called "communism." It's OUR system now . . . our system

**WHEN I WAS A CHILD I GOT WHIPPED FOR TATTLING. NOW IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE YOU FROM A 40-YEAR-TO-LIFE SENTENCE AND PEOPLE . . . WILL . . . SAY . . . ANYTHING, BECAUSE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GETS A CONVICTION 97% OF THE TIME.**

now . . . and we've got to take a hard look at that. And we have folks like Ashcroft and our own President who says you're either for us or against us. This country's greatness is its people, its people working and struggling together, and NOW those who dissent are called unpatriotic. Naw, no no no no. The patriots in this country from day one have been those who dissent, and if you don't, and you're not watching the government, and if you're all saluting and saying "yes sir, no sir", we KNOW where that leads. All of that has been

tried before; the Third Reich most particularly comes to mind. [At this point a member of the audience began yelling and advanced to the stage. After that quieted down, someone else in the audience asked how to get copies of *Razor Wire* for the audience and for radio listeners. Nora told him that her husband was in the audience with extra copies for anyone who wanted one. Then she told how to contact TNC by phone and website. She then seized the opportunity to finish her talk . . . as follows:]

**Nora:** Our new project is asking for significant and dramatic increase in federal good time eligibility, something that was taken away. Prisoners in the federal system and New York state need a way through exemplary behavior and rehabilitation to be able to one day come home. The day ANY prisoner walks into prison they need to start working on the day they get to return to their families.

So we have a petition. We're asking for that, and we hope to have a bill in Congress real soon; so if you'll help us support that effort, we'd appreciate it greatly.

Available as RealAudio at <http://www.wbai.org/>

# WAKE UP BLACK AMERICA!

BY CLIFFORD THORNTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EFFICACY

I travel all over the U.S. to speak and organize, trying to change the mindset of the current war on drugs. Last year, I was in Cleveland to address the Unitarian-Universalist convention. While there, I also spoke at a luncheon sponsored by *City News*, spoke at other civic functions, and appeared on various radio, and TV programs.

All speakers look for that current hook to bring one's subject into plain view. With the drug war it's not hard to find. "A Cleveland Police detective, while in a hand-to-hand struggle with a drug suspect, discharges his weapon and critically wounds a six-year-old boy several yards away" appeared in Cleveland's *Plain Dealer*. This incident occurred while I was in Cleveland. Every day on average in this country five children,

**THIS DRUG WAR HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS AT A COST OF A TRILLION DOLLARS, AND WE HAVE HAD ALMOST NINE DECADES OF DRUG PROHIBITION. WHY, THEN, ARE THERE MORE ILLEGAL DRUGS AT CHEAPER PRICES ON OUR STREETS THAN EVER BEFORE? MY EXPERIENCE SAYS THAT WHEN CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES FOR THE DRUG WAR, ALL CONVERSATION OUGHT TO START WITH ONE QUESTION: DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE GOING TO STOP USING ILLEGAL DRUGS? THE PREDICTABLE AND OVERWHELMING RESPONSE IS NO. THOSE THAT SAY 'YES' ARE NOT FROM THIS PLANET.**

homosexual and heterosexual encounters, are the primary conveyors of AIDS in prisons and our communities?

Is it because 'the religious community' is tied to local, state and federal funding and the authorities forbid discussion? Is it because they have become employers and employees of the drug war through rehabilitation centers and drug-counseling etc.? Is it because they have become gatekeepers where their prosperity depends on not solving the drug problem but perpetuating it?

Looking at the criminal justice system, it's true that almost two thirds of the six-and-a-half million who are on probation, parole, half-way houses, jail or prison are minorities. But there is one central theme — they are overwhelmingly of the same socioeconomic class. They are poor people. Ten percent of the African-American population is in the criminal justice system. Forty percent of the six-and-a-half million are there for possession or sale of drugs. When one looks at drug related crimes, these percentages jump to the high sixty percentiles. Where is the black church and black America on this drug war issue?

According to Reverend Beatrice Walkout of Cleveland, "Black preachers have to be educated on this issue. They are basically following what the white establishment tells them to do, and it is not to end the drug war." She went on to say, "What we need to do is to study this at length."

My question is: HOW MUCH TIME

DOES ONE NEED?

This drug war has been going on for over thirty years at a cost of a trillion dollars, and we have had almost nine decades of drug prohibition, Why, then, are there more illegal drugs at cheaper prices on our streets than ever before? My experience says that when considering alternatives for the drug war, all conversation ought to start with one question: Do you think that people are going to stop using illegal drugs? The predictable and overwhelming response is NO. Those that say 'yes' are not from this planet.

So the next question becomes: How are we as society going to create an atmosphere that will cause the least amount of harm to the people who use these drugs and secondly, the least amount of harm to society? Anyone that says we should not,

could not, would not, or that we would be sending the wrong message to our children by legalizing, medicalizing and decriminalizing illegal drugs simply does not have a clue. All of the damage done is not by the drugs but by the drug policies. There is no drug known to man that becomes safer when the sale and distribution is turned over to criminals.



Cliff Thornton speaks at St. Luke's Church Journey event, Oct 22, 2002

Our problem is not the drug dealers or drug cartels—they are just opportunists—our problem is the self-righteous legislators in Washington and the apathetic, non-voting public who create the opportunity for the drug cartels and dealers. The misinformed and uninformed people who support the drug war are directly responsible for this rise in crime, drugs in our schools, AIDS in our communities, and for creating enormous criminal empires.

Let us be realistic. Marijuana, cocaine and heroin present no problem to me or to anyone else who chooses not to use them, but the illegality of these drugs presents a clear and present danger to everyone. Just ask that six-year-old in Cleveland, whom I'm told lost his life. Just ask the thousands of parents who have lost their children to this drug war who had absolutely nothing to do with drugs.

Legalization, medicalization and decriminalization of these few outlawed drugs won't immediately solve the problems of drug abuse or addiction, but it will confine that problem to the people who choose to use these drugs. Perhaps the more important question is how do we as a society of reformers create an exit strategy for the authorities?

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## Endless pre-trial detention in Buffalo

By BILL TROLINGER, PRISONER OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

**M**y name is Bill Trolinger. I'm a fifty-one-year-old baby boomer from Baltimore, Maryland whose formative years were the turbulent 1960s and early 1970s.

I am married and have two grown daughters, two sisters, three brothers, a grandson, a very special mother, and more good friends than I can count on my fingers. I have not seen most of these people for almost four years now, and I have missed them every day of that time. My mother is getting older and may not have many years left. My younger daughter has an aneurysm in her brain that could cause death at any time. So why not go see them? America is a free country—the self-proclaimed defender of liberty throughout the world. What's the problem, then?



The problem is that I am a Federal pre-trial detainee. For the past 47 months, I have been imprisoned without bail or trial on charges that more than ten years ago I conspired to possess

and distribute marijuana. If I am convicted on all charges contained in the indictment, I face a sentence of life in prison without parole; yet I have no prior convictions or any accusations of violence on my record.

For all intents and purposes, the Federal government owns me like a slave. I am nothing more than a piece of meat, like a sheep or cow, to be shipped from place to place under strictly controlled conditions. For two and a half years I was not even allowed to go outside, and for ten months before that I was only allowed outside for one half hour per day. I have felt 'blessed' the past six months to be in a facility where I can spend up to five hours per day outdoors, albeit in a small caged area. It has

been like a beautiful dream to finally see the sun and sky again after so much time inside.

After several former friends were charged in a cannabis conspiracy in Baltimore in 1993, they decided to become informants in order to get lighter sentences. Although they confessed to many serious violations of the marijuana laws, some of them received no time or weren't charged at all. Initially a Continuing Criminal Enterprise (CCE) charge was lodged against two of them, which carried a sentence of mandatory life imprisonment upon conviction. However, the Federal Judge in Baltimore ruled that the charge had to be dismissed due to the statute of limitations and the ex post facto clause of the U.S. Constitution.

One of the accused refused to cooperate and received a five-year sentence for his part in the conspiracy. The others received much lighter sentences. My name was brought up several times in allegations, but the US Attorney felt that there was not enough evidence to make a case against me. The DEA case agent, not satisfied with this outcome, decided to "forum shop" the case around the country to find a judicial district that would give it the attention he felt it deserved. He came to Buffalo and hit pay dirt.

The first grand jury in Buffalo, after hearing the allegations from the key witnesses, declined to issue an indictment. Undaunted and undeterred by the weakness of the case, the Buffalo prosecutor and the DEA agent waited ten months for another grand jury to be empanelled, then tried again. This time it was just the DEA agent as the sole witness against me. Of course, his testimony was hearsay "summary" of what the former witnesses said to the previous grand jury. Needless to say, this "summary" was inaccurate at best, but it accomplished his goal: An indictment was issued in great haste on the last day of the grand jury's service.

**FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OWNS ME LIKE A SLAVE. I AM NOTHING MORE THAN A PIECE OF MEAT, LIKE A SHEEP OR COW, TO BE SHIPPED FROM PLACE TO PLACE UNDER STRICTLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS, I WAS NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO GO OUTSIDE, AND FOR TEN MONTHS BEFORE THAT I WAS ONLY ALLOWED OUTSIDE FOR ONE HALF HOUR PER DAY. I HAVE FELT 'BLESSED' THE PAST SIX MONTHS TO BE IN A FACILITY WHERE I CAN SPEND UP TO FIVE HOURS PER DAY OUTDOORS, ALBEIT IN A SMALL CAGED AREA.**

The next task was to get the desired judge assigned. This too was easily manipulated. The prosecutor merely had to unseal the indictment when the judge he wanted was next on the case list. Like magic, a 'hanging judge' was found who would readily deny bail.

The legal basis for my detention is the 1984 Bail Reform Act, ostensibly designed to make bail more obtainable to those who need it. Like many 'doublespeak' laws, the reality is very different. Essentially, it suspends the 8th Amendment, allowing virtually anyone accused of violating the Federal drug laws to be held without bail, giving broad discretion to the trial judge. If the detainee can then be persuaded to plead guilty to any one charge (overcharging is standard procedure), the detention is thereby justified.

The pressure to plead guilty is overwhelming in a district like this one where juries routinely convict anyone accused of drug crimes. It is particularly compelling in light of studies showing

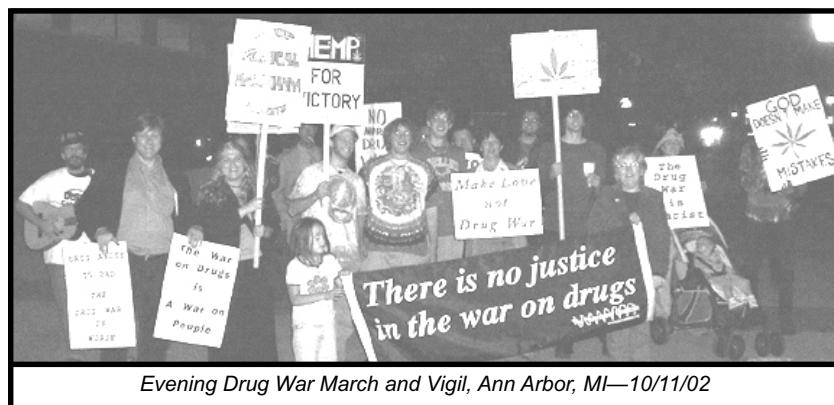
that a detainee has a four times better chance of being convicted than an accused out on bail. Juries always know who is detained despite rudimentary precautions to prevent that knowledge, and they assume it signifies guilt.

The rules have apparently changed in the past 20-30 years. Despite much reasoned opposition, the Federal government has cast aside a critical principle of

Constitutional law and thereby decided that the ends justify the means. It is evil enough that the government would make war on its own citizens in such a hypocritical and futile effort. To do so in such an ignoble, pitiless and win-at-all-costs manner, as these public servants are treating me now, has left those who claim to make and enforce the laws completely bereft of any shred of decency or moral authority. There is no justice in the war on drugs.

is unjust. DPF MI and others will build with her from there.

Interestingly, opposition to reform felt a strong need to be at this main event. Indeed, when I was in the hallway I overheard an opponent of reform on her cell phone saying "We need to get some people down here to speak up." A handful of opponents did show up and did speak against reform during question and answer periods. However, they were largely ineffective. The opponents came primarily from people in the drug treatment industry. Having opponents in the room actually enhanced the dialogue as attendees were able to hear their arguments and the effective reform responses to them.



Evening Drug War March and Vigil, Ann Arbor, MI—10/11/02

The formal event was followed by an informal event for core activists at the home of Tim Beck. Tim is the advocate who so professionally approached the medical marijuana issue in Detroit with a voter initiative. While he was unsuccessful in getting the issue on the ballot (through no fault of his own), he has shown great leadership in the way he approached the issue and promises to continue with his good work. The evening event allowed for excellent opportunity for informal discussion of next steps for Michigan activists.



Evening Drug War March and Vigil, Ann Arbor, MI—10/11/02

On Sunday, the Journey for Justice had two events at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in downtown Detroit. The pastor, Larry Hutchison, gave a sermon that weaved the drug war and its impact throughout. Nora was asked to address the UU church service, speaking to over 100 people from the pulpit. This was followed by a small meeting of 13 people who were interested in getting active. Once again the common theme of white-black-brown unity came up—the recognition that we are all in this together and need to work together was expressed.

The final event for the first stop of the Journey was a vigil at the Federal Correctional Institute at Milan outside of Detroit. A half-dozen activists stood near the sign of the FCI at a major highway holding signs proclaiming "There is No Justice in the War on Drugs."

In addition to the taping of the television show mentioned above, the NBC affiliate for Detroit took footage of the main event at Detroit Law School. In addition, the *Metro Times* attended both the event in Ann Arbor and at the law school, and was joined by several smaller community and college papers.

After this series of events, where at each there was a mix of new people as well as reform activists, Nora came to the conclusion that we have a lot of community education still ahead of us. While the new people attending had heard some background noise about the problems with the drug war, they also were largely uninformed about reform and did not know there was a growing reform movement throughout the US. Basic information is still needed for the community, media and community leaders. People know the drug war is not working—often they know people hurt by the drug war—but have not yet committed to the need to end the war on drugs.

There were other lessons learned from the Detroit experience that Nora will be sharing with November Coalition leaders and those who have expressed interest in working on the Journey.

If you want to be part of the Journey please let Tom Murlowski ([tom@november.org](mailto:tom@november.org)) know as he is manning the office while Nora and Chuck are on the road.

The schedule for the next steps in the Journey for Justice can be viewed on the November Coalition's web site by going to [www.JourneyforJustice.org](http://www.JourneyforJustice.org). This is just the first phase of the Journey for Justice—a journey that Nora and Chuck plan to stay on the next four years. So, if you want them to come to your community, let them know.

The success of the first stop of the Journey not only goes to the November Coalition but also to many local individuals and organizations—especially DPF Michigan, SSDP at University of Michigan, the Unitarian Church and Police Officers for Drug Reform. Congratulations to everyone involved for a very good beginning of a historic Journey for Justice.

## NORA CALLAHAN: Nov 16, 2002

We were moved quickly here and there in the Detroit and Ann Arbor areas, to great events and media interviews, but accompanied by a variety of organizers and able to spend quality 'commuter time' with some; long urban walks with others.

Shared meals, parking lot discussions, and event preparation periods gave us time to get to know local organizers beyond e-mail or phone exchanges of the past. Chuck's and my deepest appreciation is extended to those organizers in both directions of this Journey path for all the work you have done to prepare for our arrival.

At the vigil near Milan, an African-American man slowed down and in response to our banner message: There is No Justice in the War on Drugs, he shouted out to us, "I hope you didn't just figure that out!"

Chuck drummed up contacts for informal 'camp meetings' by asking the kids in the hotel swimming pool if they were visiting their daddies at the prison, telling them "We are here to talk with people about ending drug war injustice."

One boy jumped out of the pool and said, "What do we gotta do? We're here with our auntie."

We met with her late in the evening; elderly with a bad cold, she brought children of the family from Chicago to visit her son, "Doing 20 years for 2 grams of crack. Had we known you were going to be here, we'd have been outside at that vigil with you," she promised.

At breakfast next morning, the cashier asked where we were from. We told her, and added why we'd come to Milan, Michigan. Chuck went to the men's room and the cashier whispered, "I was a junkie and they sent me to prison. I got this job, and a few of us gals that work here have done time on drugs. I'm a criminal, I know, but...."

"You have a treatable medical condition—the law made you a criminal," I told her. She grabbed my hand for a moment, and said, "Thanks for telling me that—I'll tell the others. Do you have any information you could give us?"

We do! We left it with her to share with others; and I take with me the look in her eyes when I explained to her that sometimes laws are more culprit than those who break it. There was a look of relief in her eyes that will stay with me.

The Journey for Justice is in great part due to our extreme need for relief from the injustice of the drug war. Our learning, by meeting the war's victims, reveals the ubiquity of it. The war's casualties are all around us.

I urged those at the UU event in Detroit to look inside the prisons that are hidden in the cornfields. After meeting the recovering addict cashier, I would add - look inside the souls of this war's victims. They need relief!

We have plans for a vigil at the Federal Medical Facility in Devens, just northwest of Boston about 35-40 miles. This prison facility houses many sick prisoners; many with HIV/AIDS, who are nonviolent, no threat, under-treated, and should be released

under present 'compassionate release' that our laws provide for, but our prison officials won't press for. To understand the nature of this terrible agony on prisoners and their loved ones, please visit the story of Isidro Aviles, on the Wall portion of our web site.

Aerial photos of the prison, and graphics and other photos were provided by the Massachusetts State Patrol that are working with us to make the vigil 'successful and safe'. There are a lot of truckers that use the highway through that area we were told.

Ray Brook Federal Correctional facility is our next event; a vigil and 'camp meeting'. This time we know how to find the



Rep. Carolyn Cheeks-Kilpatrick (D-MI) with journalist Dan Forbes of Salon.com and Alternet

relatives—visit motel pools and cafes. November Coalition member Shirley Kessel told us while meeting at Milan that we needed to go to the cheaper strip motels to find our members.

Our strategy at Ray Brook will be to visit every area hotel/motel and ask to place our brochure with meeting place and time on their counters. We meet tomorrow with families to vigil and hold a 'camp meeting'. Ray Brook prison is the only federal prison in the country that has not one November Coalition member.

One message we are driving home to our members is this: Sending annual dues to have "Nora 'n Chuck" end the drug war isn't the way to think—not now or ever. Hell will freeze over before that would happen. More and more of us working together, building a movement of active people, will result in reform. Dues help us do the work of leadership, but thinking you are paying us to do the work . . . nope, get that out of your heads. Take one or more projects, or organizing ideas we put out to you, and work with us. We are in this together. Network with others in your community, become an active member in the movement to end the war on drugs.

Visit [www.JourneyForJustice.org](http://www.JourneyForJustice.org)—photos of Journey events are posted and labeled there. Upcoming event details for the next portion of the journey can be found there also.

We hope to find you on the Journey!



Nora Callahan of The November Coalition speaking at Mercy Law School, Detroit, MI—10/12/02

## Request for creative expression

HEY young people, prisoners, ex-prisoners, family of prisoners, probation officers, police officers, people who work in prisons, prison activists and advocates!

We are looking for submissions for inclusion in a book meant to de-mystify the "prison industrial complex," to document people's experience with the criminal justice system, and to serve as an organizing tool for young people of color.

Examples of subjects we are looking for: Personal experience of being in jail, growing up with family members and/or close friends being in jail, watching someone close to you get arrested, advice to others about how not to get locked up, working inside prisons or in the criminal justice system, LGBTTSQ issues and prisons, growing up assuming you will end up in jail, organizing around prisons/criminal justice issues, calling the police, locking someone up, health issues inside prison, the death penalty, and choose your own.

Submissions can be in the form of personal experience writing, artwork, photography, drawings, paintings, graffiti, poetry, lyrics, short stories, graphics, screen play, letters, any form of creative expression whatsoever!

When we say 'prisons' we mean regional jails, county jails, state prisons, federal prisons, private prisons, juvenile detention centers, immigration detention centers, group homes, holding cells, mental institutions and the like.

When we say 'criminal justice system' we mean all types of prisons, criminal courts, police agencies and all of the people involved in its operation — lawyers, judges, district attorneys, parole and probation, police, drug trafficking, criminal laws, policies, politics and politicians.

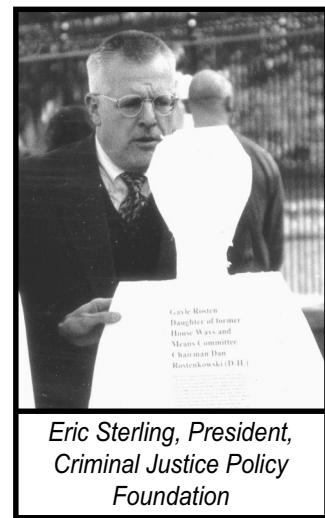
Send submissions no later than March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003. All entries will receive a response. Those selected for publication will receive compensation. If you want original artwork returned, please send a SASE.

E-mail to: [prisons@bust.com](mailto:prisons@bust.com) or mail hard copy to:  
Prison World • c/o Soft Skull Press  
71 Bond Street • Brooklyn, NY 11217  
Or fax (718) 643-0879

# Journey for Justice makes



**Special Thanks to  
the DC Action  
Committee**



Eric Sterling, President,  
Criminal Justice Policy  
Foundation

THE JOURNEY COMES AT AN INCREASING TIME OF FRUSTRATION FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF PEOPLE ENSNARED IN THE US'S DRUG GULAG. THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT AND HIS ATTORNEY GENERAL HAVE GIVEN LITTLE HOPE OF SENTENCING REFORM. AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL THE FRUSTRATION IS BEGINNING TO BOIL.



"IF GEORGE W. BUSH IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE WHITE HOUSE, MY BROTHER IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY HOUSE!"

PROCLAIMED NORA CALLAHAN OF THE NOVEMBER COALITION AT THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE DEMONSTRATION AT THE WHITE HOUSE. SHE WAS URGING THE RELEASE OF HER BROTHER WHO IS SERVING A 27-YEAR DRUG OFFENSE SENTENCE OF WHICH HE HAS SERVED 14 YEARS.

APPROXIMATELY 50 DEMONSTRATORS HIGHLIGHTED THE RACISM AND HYPOCRISY OF THE DRUG WAR BY PLACING 20 CARDBOARD CUTOUTS IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE. FOUR OF THE FIGURINES WERE OF PRESIDENTS BUSH AND CLINTON, VICE PRESIDENT GORE AND SPEAKER GINGRICH - HIGHLIGHTING THEIR PAST DRUG USE. SIX FIGURINES DESCRIBED THE STORIES OF TWELVE CHILDREN OF POLITICIANS WHO GOT CAUGHT AND RECEIVED GENTLE TREATMENT BY THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. AND TEN OF THE FIGURINES WERE A LIFE-SIZED BAR GRAPH OF THE PRISON POPULATION - SIX BLACK, TWO BROWN AND TWO WHITE WITH FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE DRUG GULAG. THE DARK COLORS OF THE REAL PRISON POPULATION CONTRASTED WITH THE ALL-WHITE MAKE-UP OF THE ELITES WHO AVOID THE DRUG WAR TREATMENT DESPITE THEIR DRUG USE. PHOTOS, REPORTS AND PRESS OF THE DC DEMONSTRATION AND OTHERS STOPS ALONG THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE ARE AVAILABLE AT THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE ARCHIVE AT [www.JOURNEYFORJUSTICE.ORG](http://www.JOURNEYFORJUSTICE.ORG).

Invited to a party? Ask your host if you can bring some extra friends.

They don't eat or drink a thing, but they keep the conversation going.

Participating in a demonstration? These folks will ride in the trunk and double the size of your protest - without protest.

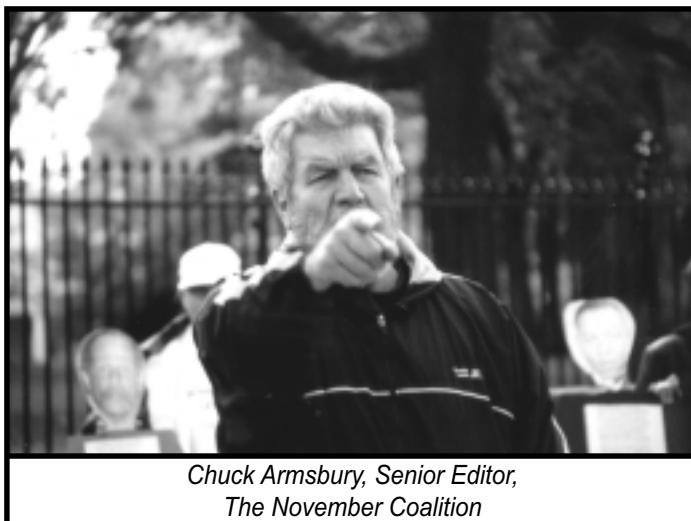
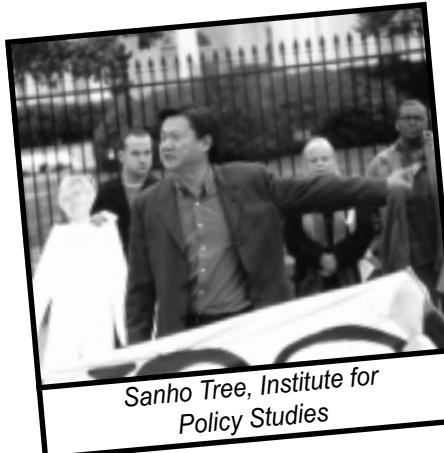
These life-sized volunteers love to hang out with activists wherever you meet.

Inspired by the DC Action Committee and the Nov. 1 Journey for Justice vigil at the White House, these folks will soon be available in a set of 14 life-size figures, 4 oversize posters and a nylon version of the banner above. Each figure is 5 feet tall, laminated in 10 mil plastic. The theme of the display is "Race, Hypocrisy and the Drug War". Contact the November Coalition for details: (509) 684-1550 or [tom@november.org](mailto:tom@november.org)



# demands at White House!

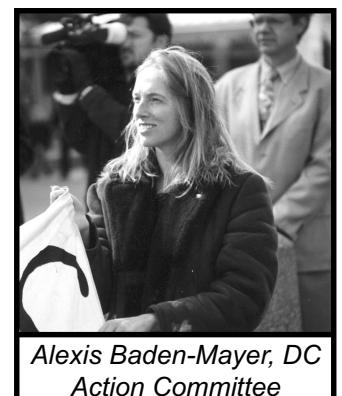
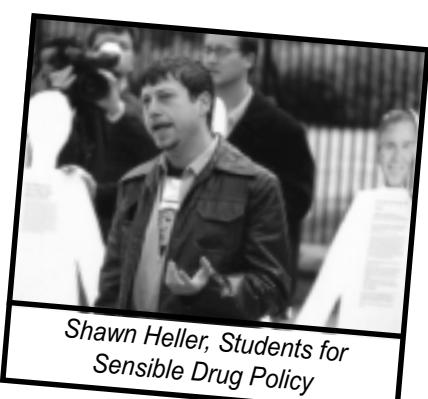
Nov 1, 2002



THE DEMONSTRATORS CHANTED: "WHAT DO WE DO WHEN COMMUNITIES FAIL? BUILD SCHOOLS, NOT JAILS!" AND "1-2-3-4 WE DON'T WANT YOUR RACIST WAR!"



REFORM ACTIVISTS ARE GETTING MORE AGGRESSIVE IN RESPONSE TO DRUG WAR INJUSTICE.



SPEAKERS AT THE DC DEMONSTRATION INCLUDED FAMILIES OF DRUG WAR PRISONERS FROM OREGON, WEST VIRGINIA, WASHINGTON STATE, NORTH CAROLINA AND WASHINGTON, DC - ALL URGING THE PRESIDENT TO GIVE CLEMENCY TO THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AS WELL AS URGING NEW LAWS TO REDUCE THE MASS INCARCERATION OF NON-VIOLENT DRUG OFFENDERS. FAMILY MEMBERS WERE JOINED BY LEADERS OF NATIONAL DRUG POLICY REFORM ORGANIZATIONS WHO URGED AN END TO MASS INCARCERATION OF DRUG OFFENDERS.

Journey for Justice photo credits: Doug McVay, Dick Gach, Chuck Armsbury and many others — thank you!

# Journey for Justice in Connecticut

CLIFF THORNTON, FOUNDER OF EFFICACY: Oct 24, 2002

**M**ark Kinzley, an outstanding outreach harm reductionist who works for Dr. Robert Hymer of Yale University said, "The forum last night was the best ever for New Haven, bar none." October 22<sup>nd</sup> marked the second stop for The Journey for Justice in New Haven, CT, with a march that visited three locations: police headquarters, the main courthouse and the local jail. The marchers, some seventy strong, were a mix of young, old, students, teachers, preachers, and politicians that were filmed at every location. I did not attend the march so I will let Nora and Chuck give their impression. The eleven o'clock news showed the marches at the three locations.

A forum was held after the march which featured a Columbian activist (John Lugo), a community activist (Barbara Fair), Nora and Chuck. A hundred and three people attended. The eleven o'clock news had a five minute segment featuring Barbara Fair (People Against Injustice), one of the organizers plus Chuck and Nora. Five groups helped organize the two-hour forum that started with everyone giving their name and a brief description of how the drug war has affected them. With the energy level at a fever pitch, Nora blew the roof off with her presentation. During the Q&A Chuck talked about his experience with the Black Panthers and you could see the Black people rally to his side. This event will really push the activists groups in the New Haven area to produce other forums. I have had three calls this morning wanting to have four such events in the coming year.

The Brad Davis talk radio show started the first leg, which has a listener audience of over one million. Interesting note: four major newspapers in the state have or are presently running a four or five part series on drug war issues, which have appeared over the last two months. The latest series is in the Hartford paper entitled "Heroin Town." Nora, Chuck and I were walking into the studio and we found a syringe on the ground. We brought it into the studio; what a perfect lead-in, because the host immediately brought up "Heroin Town." Brad Davis is going to sponsor four hour-long public TV shows featuring Efficacy and the Drug War next year.

I will let Chuck and Nora give their impressions of the forum at Wesleyan University; they were just great. The next time I will not go easy on scheduling. I will say that there were "runners" from some of the politicians at both events. Let me close by saying that I would love to help sponsor another Journey for Justice tour.

NORA CALLAHAN: Oct 24, 2002

**T**he march in New Haven?

It was big, noisy, orderly and got bigger as we went along, gathering people to the forum later. That was a first for us, I'd easily say.

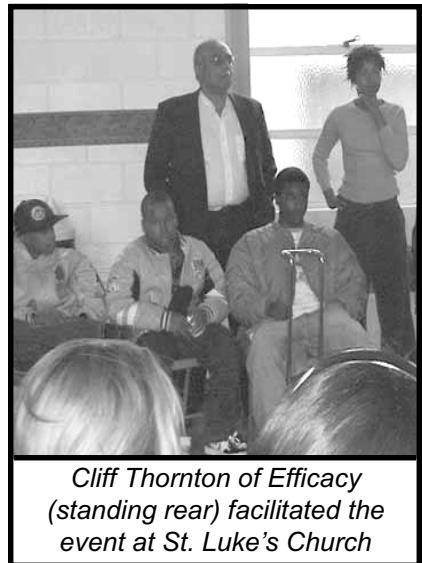
It began at the police station, made its way to the courthouse and then to the jail, vigiling for a time before ending at St. Luke's Church, where we had a public forum.

This 'Path of Injustice' the march took through New Haven illustrated what that means: Police target minorities, courtrooms are full of lies, and prisons are warehouses of misery. All along we chanted, teaching them our chants, and learning theirs. Our favorite new chant?

"What do we do when communities fail? Build schools, not jails!"

Neighbors filled their porches, TV cameras followed along, set up at the next stop where speeches were given; lines of cars honked long and loud; young black men led the chanting, and led the way through busy intersections. Participants gave out informational leaflets through the streets - then into the residential area where the large local gulag is located. Literally - in the back yards of New Haven's poor!

Later the forum was 100+ people, and everyone got their turn to tell us why they came. So people were 'fired up' and involved, long before I spoke my mind as to why I was there. And up until this time, only a few knew who in the hell Chuck and I were, anyway! And there were refreshments for all! Women were scurrying to the store and back again, when the crowd in the church grew past expectations. We were not the 'cause' of enthusiasm - but surely were there to experience it collectively.



Cliff Thornton of Efficacy (standing rear) facilitated the event at St. Luke's Church

Mark Kinzley's remarks are very encouraging. We sensed the moment of 'community resolve' that night, too. There have been many groups coalescing for some time, leadership in this state working together on various projects; and it is evident that diverse groups have grasped the commonality of the war on drugs—as the direct cause of most of their concerns.

At one point, a young black man asked, "What exactly should we do?"

In short, I could only answer, "Meet every two weeks, not to simply talk—you have to do things. Change your community!" Chuck talked about service and education—making it real. Another young man urged the younger not to 'sell the man's drugs'—and told how he lost much of his intestines, liver and colon to gun fire in the streets. He spoke about serving time and his struggle today, post 9/11; losing employment because he is a Muslim. He sells sandwiches now. The young black men spoke about legal enterprises, about being brave and working hard, creating community based businesses, and the hope they have in changing a system that sends them to prison in droves.

Mostly African-American people—but including Hispanics, Asians; I told them how I came to discover the racism of the drug war the first time I visited my brother. We were the only white family in the visiting room. I shared with them what I had learned from history regarding struggle, race and class. That social convention first frowned upon social alliances of race; that didn't keep us apart. Laws were made—that didn't keep us apart either, especially with regard to coming together in struggle. When class division came in—the idea that white people, though poor, could attain more things, more stuff, more material goods—that worked to keep us apart. See, when a person has more stuff, here in this country—and most places—that means you must be better. Thinking we are better than one another, based on the stuff we have—that keeps us apart.

To end the drug war, we all have to come together. Just as we concluded the small neighborhood meeting in Detroit, the large neighborhood meeting concluded in New Haven. It's time for us all to come together to end the injustice of the war on drugs.

Ron Scott, the gentleman who hosted us on Detroit's 'For My People' TV show, is donating a video camera so that special moments of these Journeys for Justice can be shared more effectively in the future. Chuck has taken some great photos of this March and forum, be sure to visit <http://www.JourneyforJustice.org>—the still photos are worth a thousand of my words.

A young girl about 15 years old stood up and said, "My brother is in prison for drugs; I was isolated and ashamed, but neither anymore," and it went like that this most interesting and exciting evening. That's my line! Hearing it from her? Good to hear!

The beginning of Connecticut's visit began for Chuck and I at Danbury Federal Correctional facility, where for the first time we vigiled. We moved down the highway to a grassy spot, near the prison you don't see at all—only the stately grounds, acres of it—like something out of Gone with the Wind.

From the highway, Danbury looks like the plantation ground it is today. Built to house just under 600, there are almost 1,100 women crammed inside, and more have been added to a 'camp' that is overcrowded as well.

Next appointment was a radio talk show, the most popular one in Connecticut—but the host was more intent to talk with Cliff; apparent immediately upon our arrival, just after he'd read the second installment of the newspaper series 'Heroin Town', punctuated dramatically with the used-syringe-in-hand entrance we made into the studio.

Chuck jokes that he was "looking for money" when he saw the needle syringe. The radio host, a self-described conservative, tells us about his long and stormy relationship with Cliff, then avows that he is beginning to see the light, and he's "taking some heat" for it. The show goes on, then afterward, at least three times he promises Cliff that he will bring together a large and influential forum to "get to the bottom of this drug war mess", emphatically adding, "Once and for all!"

Sharing Cliff's 'pay-dirt' moment was sweet and savory. He's been working to educate this man for a long time! We were an excuse for them to get together again—it worked!

Wesleyan College was an intimate group of about 40 students. A memorable moment for me was early on, when Booth Haley, the SSDPer that organized the event, introduced himself by saying, "Hi, I'm Jeff Haley's son. You've worked with my dad in Seattle."

I saw his father in the son, and it is such a comfort to work with the students, a reminder that forces now push from the growing ranks of them on more and more campuses—how these efforts must be a large priority of every reform leader; such a no-brainer. We saw students greet Cliff, "Hey Cliff, thanks for coming." "Hi Cliff!" thinking it real cool that Cliff remembered their name, or the last place they saw each other. Good to see that we are real important to them as well; they are so pleased that the 'old folks' have come to share time with them.

I sighed with relief. This journey is about relief from the injustice of the drug war. I'm relieved to see so many activists working hard, experiencing directly the fruit of their labors. I'm relieved to see the 'broad and diverse movement' is more 'broad and diverse' than I thought it was! Very active, too!

We began our presentation at Wesleyan the first night, with a short video clip featuring drug war prisoner Hamedah Hassan, watched a couple young men struggle to deal with tears falling off their jaws, one young woman crying openly. When completed and aired in 2004, this full-length film promises to bring hope and inspiration as well as the tears the short trailer does today. Melissa Mummert, a UU seminarian, is heading up this project—we are eagerly preparing people for its' arrival!

Quickly canvassing the group after intros to the November Coalition and Journey for Justice, all were of the opinion the war on drugs should end. Mark Braunstein

presented his story and struggle as a paraplegic, his hopes for the decriminalization of marijuana, and then Cliff moderated questions and comments. We spent most of this time talking about organizing; committing to the diverse and growing movement to end the war on drugs. "This is your Vietnam," I told them—hoping none would be drafted into the ranks of the Bureau of Prisons.

One of our purposes for the Journey for Justice was to establish working relationships with more drug reform leaders. At the urban visit of Ann Arbor/Detroit, we worked with colleagues



Drug War Forum, St. Luke's Church, New Haven, CT—10/22/02



is donating a video camera so that special moments of these Journeys for Justice can be shared more effectively in the future. Chuck has taken some great photos of this March and forum, be sure to visit <http://www.JourneyforJustice.org>—the still photos are worth a thousand of my words.

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Drug War Forum, St. Luke's Church, New Haven, CT—10/22/02

we had never met before. Connecticut was unique in that we worked with Cliff and Margaret face to face for the first time, having known each other for over five years. Now we can work together more effectively, understanding who our respective constituencies are; how we 'do what we do' more clearly. Much of our time was spent in small groups, 'head banging', sharing the concerns leaders have, strategizing, and encouraging each other, too.

We left Connecticut with the promise to return, and from them and all the activists we met, we take with us the promise that next time we won't be alone down Danbury Gulag's way. Cliff Thornton and friends have promised to negotiate with us for a strip of that Plantation land, or we'll have to take to the streets of their once "Hattery" town to declare that there is no justice in the war on drugs!

Thank you to all the Connecticut organizers and participants! We had a wonderful time with you all.



John Lugo, of Colombia Connecticut



Ruth Person, the November Coalition

## Journey for Justice—Madison, WI Nov 13, 2002



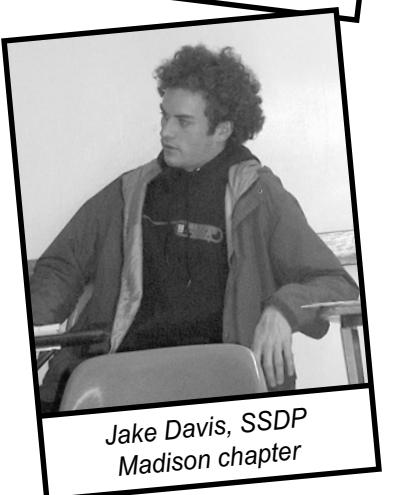
Chuck Armsbury and Claude Tower of The November Coalition



SSDP meeting



SSDP meeting

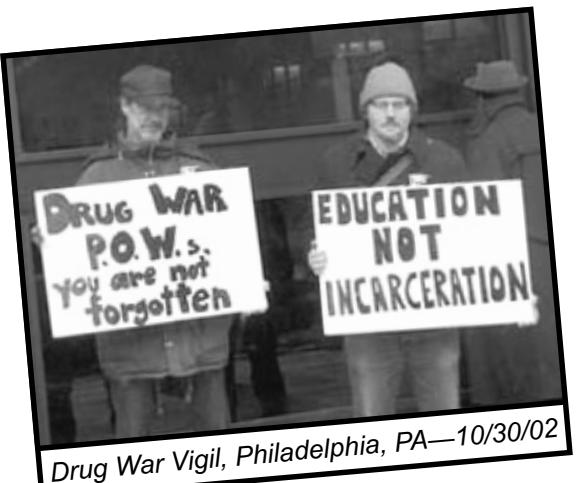


Jake Davis, SSDP Madison chapter



November Coalition Camp Meeting, Yankton, SD—11/16/02

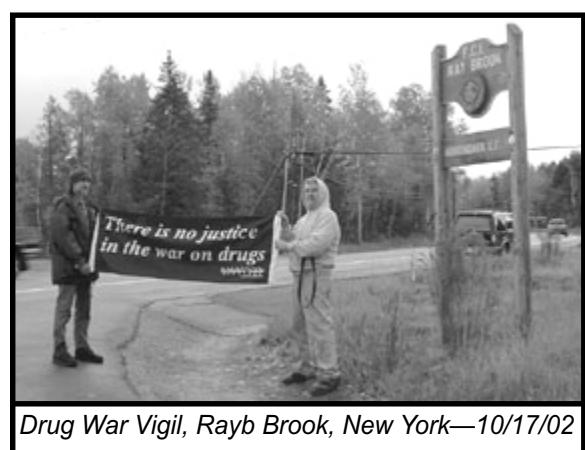
"THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE WILL FORTIFY  
RESOLVE AND AWAKEN THE DIGNITY OF  
ORDINARY PEOPLE ASSAULTED DAILY BY A  
DRUG WAR THAT ISN'T A WAR ON DRUGS —  
BUT A WAR ON PEOPLE." —NORA CALLAHAN



Drug War Vigil, Philadelphia, PA—10/30/02



Panel/forum audience, Mercy Law School, Detroit, MI—10/12/02



Drug War Vigil, Rayb Brook, New York—10/17/02

"THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE IS  
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DRUGS." —CHUCK ARMSBURY



Press coverage at the White House vigil—11/1/02



Forum at Temple University Beasley Law School, Philadelphia, PA—10/29/02



Dr. Ernest Drucker, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, at Fordham Law School event, New York City, 10/25/02



Rainbow Farm vigil/memorial, Cass County, MI—11/12/02



Vigil at FMC Devens—10/18/02



November Coalition Camp Meeting, Morgantown, WV—11/10/02

THE JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE IS AN EFFORT  
TO ACTIVATE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO MAKE SURE  
THAT THE CONCERNs OF CITIZENS DIRECTLY  
AFFECTED BY THE DRUG WAR ARE HEARD.

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO EMPOWER PEOPLE, BUT WE HAVE  
TO TELL THEM IT IS TIME TO STOP BEGGING AND START  
DEMANDING THAT THESE INJUSTICES STOP."  
—CHUCK ARMSBURY, THE NOVEMBER COALITION



REFORMATORY  
FOR WOMEN  
The only Federal industrial  
institution for women is one  
mile west. Established by an  
act of Congress, June 7, 1924.  
Received first tenants, April  
30, 1927. Formally opened Nov  
24, 1928. Stresses rehabilita-  
tion and industrial education.

# Activism from inside

BY GLENN EARLY, PRISONER OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

I have been asked by the November Coalition to write about a topic I feel very strongly about and devote most of my time to while in prison—activism through letter writing. Roughly eight years ago, after my 30-year conviction was made final and I lost my direct appeal, I began to understand just how easy it is for an individual with little or no knowledge of crime to become legally accountable for the actions of others. In 1988, the United States Congress enacted the federal conspiracy laws which are written so broadly that they are often used to prosecute anyone from grandparents for answering the telephone, to unborn babies for being in the company of their mothers. It was then that I realized that our nation's victimizing conspiracy laws, interwoven with the failed policies of the "War on Drugs," must be repealed quickly before another generation of citizens is added to the growing list of government casualties.

It was then that I began writing letters to express my discontent with the hypocritical drug war and the sweeping conspiracy laws. I discovered a few others that were doing the same. We exchanged many addresses and shared several ideas. Finally, in April of 1997, with the assiduous efforts of Nora Callahan, these ideas became reality and a grassroots organization was born—The November Coalition.

I immediately became an ardent member of the November Coalition and, to do my part, started generating letters (now nearing ten thousand) inviting the media and lawmakers to visit our website and the "Wall" to see for themselves the devastation created by the "War on Drugs." I have also encouraged the media and lawmakers to use our website as a valuable source of information. I, too, am on the "Wall" which shows my striking

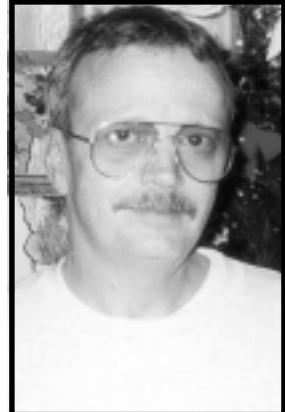


photo along with a brief background of my case. This approach is our strongest weapon, and I am convinced that generating public outcry will force our political leaders to rethink and abolish our nation's unfair policies.

I have not done anything out of the ordinary other than make a commitment and stick to it. The following are a few of the letter writing projects that I have generated while behind bars. If I were released today I would continue to do the same.

Throughout the years I have generated hundreds of letters for friends and family members throughout the states to send to their respective congressmen and senators. This method works quite well because most people, even friends and family, are too busy with their own daily lives to find time to write. Many members of Congress do respond with a form letter, which often has nothing to do with the original topic, but it provides the opportunity to reply and set them straight. Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the anthrax scare in our nation's capitol, I find that contacting members of Congress at their local addresses reduces the mailing time from months to days. I have discovered that finding the local address of a congressman can be difficult. Prison libraries, by design, provide little or no address information outside the court system or the Bureau of Prisons.

I have written to the Presidents, Drug Czars, Attorney Generals, governors, state lawmakers, state judges, a thousand federal judges, and, of course, hundreds of members of Congress to express my concerns and, most importantly, bring the November Coalition to their attention. My objective is to inform our political leaders that there is a constantly growing number of citizens joining together who oppose our nation's current policies; policies that didn't work during alcohol prohibition and don't work today.

My greatest challenge is the postage stamps, for I am not a wealthy man; however, I write a "Letter to the Editor" of the top 100 newspapers every month. I always keep the LTE's within the general standard of 250 words so that the Editorial Page Editors are more apt to print them. I know of at least 30 of my letters showing up on opinion/letter pages. I would have to guess that when a letter is printed at least 10 percent to as much as 50 percent of the newspaper's audience reads the editorial

pages and letters. The number one newspaper in the nation is The Wall Street Journal, with a daily circulation of approximately 1.75 million. The 100<sup>th</sup> ranked newspaper is the Honolulu Advertiser with a little over 100,000 daily readers. Any way you look at it, a letter printed catches the eyes of tens of thousands.

I receive address information from the Internet through my very supportive sister, Ellen. With her assistance, I am able to contact individuals who have written positive letters to major newspapers so that I can encourage them to join in and support our fight.

I respond to many newspaper articles by sending a letter to both the writer and the editorial page editor, again keeping within the standard 250-word limit. I focus my efforts on responding to articles related to the drug war and the mass incarceration of our people. My letters respond to stories of drive-by shootings and police corruption, showing how the modern day prohibition of drugs has caused street gangs to flourish and run wild, while the police protect the gangs and fill their own pockets with cash.

During The November Coalition's year 2000, "Jubilee Justice Petition" campaign, I sent out hundreds of petitions, along with a cover page to individuals in radio and television media, newspaper columnists, and editors across the nation. The goal was persuading President Clinton to grant clemency to non-violent drug offenders who had served at least five years of their sentences. Now I am going through the same process with The November Coalition's "Petition for Relief from Drug War Injustice" campaign. This naturally keeps me working furiously because I want to get the petition to the media as soon as possible to allow them more time to work with it.

I will continue to follow the path I have chosen and not to do like so many others behind bars—simply wish that the President and Congress would wake-up one morning and say "Let us give the federal prisoners a break and pass legislation to swing the iron gates open." That is not going to happen! The only way to stop this injustice is to let our political leaders know that prohibition is wrong and that the American public demands change. Education and treatment, along with decriminalization, regulation, and taxation is the most viable cure to our nation's drug consumption.

## THE WALL

### Alva Mae Groves

Sentenced to 24 years in prison at age 72

I am 81 years old and have been incarcerated since 1994. I was charged with Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute and Distributing Cocaine Base, and I was also charged with possessing a gun. The court sentenced me to 24 years in prison on these charges.

My real crime, according to today's laws of betrayal, was refusing to testify against my sons, children of my womb, that were conceived, birthed and raised with love, of which there were fourteen children in all - nine girls and six boys. The government said I could have received a reduction in my sentence if I would have testified, but since I couldn't do such a thing, prosecutors then said I was a manager/supervisor in this offense, thereby raising my offense level by three points and increasing my sentence substantially.

Of course I didn't really understand all this talk about enhancements, acceptance of responsibility, and so on, that had to do with my sentencing. But I did understand that since I wouldn't turn against my own family that I was going to receive a very lengthy prison term. Never did I dream it would be twenty-four years.

On advice of my attorney, I accepted a deal for a sentence that also had me signing all appeal rights away. I was also denied a three-level decrease in my sentence for acceptance of responsibility because my attorney advised me not to speak without him present. As I say, I didn't understand all the legal jargon and totally relied on my attorney's assistance. I still don't understand how one can sign their right to appeal away when one hasn't even received their sentence. It's all beyond me. I know I sat there and watched while my whole family was buried by sentences of thirty years (my daughter Margaret), seventeen-and-a-half years (my granddaughter Pam) and my other sons, one who received a natural life sentence. I still don't understand all of it.

When this all began back in 1994, I was 72 years old and lived out in a trailer in Clayton, North Carolina. That trailer sat on a lot belonging to my son, William Robert, where I lived with and cared for my two granddaughters, Fontara (11 years old) and Jasmine (9 years old), my youngest son's children. The only money I received came from SSI and what money I could earn selling eggs from my laying hens (I had about 100 chickens). I also cleaned houses when I was able, and sold candy bars and soft drinks to the kids coming from school in the afternoons.

We lived six miles out of town and there weren't any stores close by. My children were always welcome at my home and would come to check on me and help me as they could. My

doors were always locked when I was gone, but my children had keys to get in. The day I was arrested I was working in my garden at my son's house about five miles from my home. I had woods around my own home and no place for a garden. I was working in this garden the day the Sheriff's department came and arrested me. While I was gardening five miles away, the police broke into my home. They said they had found drugs, but I don't believe that.



After I was arrested, they wanted me to testify against my son Ricky. I worked hard all my life and I raised my children to be responsible and to work for what they wanted. They all knew how I felt about an honest day's work. If any of my children, including Ricky, were doing anything less than that, they wouldn't have let me know about it because they know how I feel. If I can tend my chickens, clean houses, and sell soda pops and candy to make money at 72 years old, they can all work too. I did the best I could to raise my children and grandchildren. But just as it is with anyone else's children, I had no control over what they did when they were grown and on their own.

When I was arrested I had \$1,000.00 in the bank from selling eggs and candy. Most of it was deposited in change - nickels, dimes and quarters - and the bankers substantiated this fact. I earned that money one egg at a time, one soda pop at a time, one candy bar at a time. It wasn't from selling drugs as the government contends.

Six of my family members are in prison because the government wanted my son Ricky. They offered me home confinement if I would testify against him, but he is my son, and I couldn't do that anymore than I could do anything else that would harm any of my children. When I refused to testify against Ricky in exchange for home confinement, the police got mad and said I was the drug kingpin and that my family was selling drugs for me. I think this was the only way they could justify, or try to justify, arresting a 72-year-old woman who sold eggs for a living. The government gave other people all reduced sentences for their statements. All these people belonged to the government. I've never even seen half of them.

I have now been in prison for close to 10 years. As I unknowingly signed all my rights to appeal away, the only thing I could do was petition the President of the United States for a Commutation of Sentence. From FCI Tallahassee, I was transferred to the Medical Facility in Carswell, Fort Worth, Texas, due to health problems. My application for a Commutation of Sentence was submitted while there in February of 2000. I have since been transferred back here to FCI Tallahassee and my application is still pending.

I realize everyone has a day to die; death is a fate that will not be cheated. But I don't want to die in prison. I want to die at home surrounded by the love of what's left of my family. I do not have enough years left of my life to finish serving this twenty-four year sentence as I am already 81 years old. I'm appealing to anyone to write letters for me to the Pardon Attorney's Office in Washington while my application is still pending.

Thank you.

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# November Coalition Member Accomplishments

## Mark Ingraham's niece publishes award-winning novel

BY NORA CALLAHAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE NOVEMBER COALITION

**M**ark Ingraham was in his third year of imprisonment when his sister, Martha Christman, moved from Eugene, Oregon to her mountain home not far from Colville. Martha called me after settling in. She wanted 'safety valve' retroactivity, reform that might set her brother free. It was excluded from the crime bill last millennium, due to Moses (aka Charlton Heston) taking to the television to warn that 16,000 drug dealers would be loose on the streets if it passed — sentencing relief for first time offenders would benefit future offenders, not our brothers.

November Coalition was a small website with crude graphics, an emerging concept when Martha and I met for the first time. After our first visit, Martha's son, Ian Christman, an accomplished graphic designer created our logo and graphics. Martha began developing displays to use in public education, and didn't miss an opportunity to take the booth she made to public gatherings in the northwest. I had someone local who understood my passion and agreed to help begin a national organization.



Jill Christman

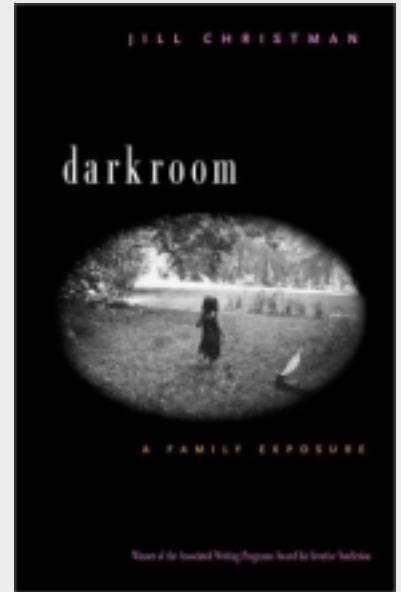
The role of drug war activist crowded her schedule. A spring visit with Mark would wait for summer. Mid-summer came, and Martha and her daughter Jill left to visit Mark. I was unpacking, having just visited my brother Gary. Martha, Jill and Mark were not able to have their visit, nor any since. While they traveled to see him, he died. We shared our grief in the pages of this paper, now years ago.

To honor Mark Ingraham's life, and his sister Martha's commitment to launching this organization, and her family's sacrifices, we share the joy of announcing her daughter Jill's first published work— Winner of the Associated Writing Programs Award for Creative Nonfiction. To honor this book, readers should know that it was the most fascinating story I ever read. If you are eager to read a compelling true story this winter, *Darkroom* is recommended reading.

*Darkroom: A Family Exposure* is Jill Christman's gripping, funny, and wise account of her first thirty years. Although her story runs the gamut of dramatic life events, including childhood sexual abuse, accidental death, and psychological trauma, Christman's poignant memoir is much more than a litany of horrors; instead, it is an open-eyed, wide-hearted, and good-humored look at a life worth surviving.

Through a shifting narrative of text and photographs, Christman explores the intersection of image and memory and considers the ways photographs force us to rework our original memories. *Darkroom* is a page-turning and disturbing journey that begins with an older brother's near fatal burning and progresses through a counterculture childhood; it slams into a young adulthood of love, literature, drugs, death, and therapists, and ends soon after a beloved uncle bleeds to death in a federal prison while serving a ten-year sentence for growing marijuana.

Never sentimental, Jill Christman is brutally honest and surprisingly funny. She deftly blends narrative, quoted materials, her uncle's letters, and her father's photography to create a family saga that is both heartbreakingly and exhilarating.



**Darkroom: A Family Exposure by Jill Christman**  
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264 pages / 21 B&W photos / Memoir  
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## I see a different drug war now

BY JOHN HUMPHREY, NOVEMBER COALITION REGIONAL VOLUNTEER

**W**hen I first became involved with drug policy reform, it was from a Libertarian, Cognitive Liberty, abstract perspective, and the statistics related to gang violence were just that—statistics—no bearing on my own life whatsoever.

All that changed when I moved to 6<sup>th</sup> and Broadway in Venice, California. There was a drive-by shooting the first night I moved in. Since then, almost three years ago, there have been probably a dozen drug/gang-related murders within three blocks from where I sleep. At first I was scared. Was I at risk? When I ride my bike home at night, and pass by crack dealers on the corner, am I in danger? I love living by the beach, but it certainly wouldn't be worth risking my life.

I bought a scanner and began to monitor police activity whenever I heard shots fired. Over time I came to understand that all the gun violence was gang/drug related, usually gang on gang or even within one gang. Occasionally a buyer would be killed—once for passing counterfeit hundreds, and another time for not paying off his debt.

Then there was the case of Jim Richards. Jim was a former organizer of the Guardian Angels—a big time Neighborhood Watch type guy with an aggressive 'let's clean up the neighborhood' attitude. He published an e-zine called the *Neighborhood News*. It was the best source for police type neighborhood info because Jim had friends at Pacific Division.

Because he slept with a scanner turned on next to his bed, Jim was often the first person at the scene of a crime. Somewhere along the way Jim 'stepped over a line,' and about a year and a half ago he was gunned down in his driveway. I heard the shots. Two guns emptied.

A year went by with no arrests, and then I read that over 20 people had been indicted through the Federal system on charges related to Richard's murder. Being familiar with the drug conspiracy laws, I imagined some kind of big time snitch-out was going on and that, yes, justice would be served, whether or not they caught the actual perpetrators. And it seemed the neighborhood breathed a collective sigh of relief, except for the black and brown mothers who wondered why the investigations of their murdered sons were not going anywhere.

The neighborhood did get a little quieter for a while, and the real estate 'sharks' continued their agenda of re-marketing 'the hood' as 'the last chance to own by the beach!' In only a few months business is back all the way (white customers in late model SUVs and BMWs primarily). A load of new dealers 'fresh out of the joint' are on the corner, and the sound of gunfire is once again common.

I was out of town for a weekend, but when I got home my neighbors told me about a shooting on Sunday. They didn't know much more than that someone was killed about a block down our street. Los Angeles' authorities have switched to an all-digital police radio system, and you can't get any info from the scanners anymore. No one can get any information from the police, and the newspapers seldom cover such stories anymore. It's like it's not happening at all.

It's happening for sure. Yesterday, while on my bicycle riding to the post office, a woman called me to the curb and in tears asked me if I knew anything about a shooting last Sunday. She was with another woman and a man. They were probably in their late 50s. It turned out they were the parents and aunt of the man who was shot. They had brought candles and a crucifix and were making a little shrine.

The police had given them the address where the man was killed. As I talked to the aunt, the mother burst into tears when she found daubs of blood on the sidewalk. She sprinkled Holy Water. The father told me that, yes, he thought that his son had had a cocaine problem and used occasionally. I took their address and promised I'd call if I heard anything more. Because the man killed was somehow involved in the drug trade, nobody expects the police to really do anything about it.

This is your War on Drugs, and we shouldn't be getting used to it.



John Humphrey on guitar at the TNC Workshop, 1999

## Oakland activist youth in new video — Books Not Bars

**T**he *Razor Wire* featured in the July/August/September 2001 issue a story called "Oakland youth rally to oppose jail." Using a variety of bold, creative tactics, 70 young people "crashed a stuffy meeting of California's Board of Corrections," and convinced Board members to withdraw \$2.3 million in pre-approved funding that was earmarked to help build a new juvenile prison in Alameda County.

Now you can see the power and resourcefulness of young people in a new video depicting this important, local struggle for justice. As such, the video can be a powerful and effective tool for people mobilizing to reform this country's juvenile justice system.

"Books Not Bars" is a twenty-one minute video that documents the inspiring youth-led movement to reform a system that over-incarcerates working class people and people of color, according to information released by its distributor, WITNESS. "Featuring music by Dead Prez and Sweet Honey in the Rock, "Books Not Bars" examines the criminalization of young people, corporate gain from the warehousing of youth and the disparity between money spent on prison and money spent on education in the United States."

WITNESS, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and the Human Rights Law Institute at Columbia Law School collaborated to make this video. Additionally, WITNESS is also able to provide an action pack designed to give local activists concrete tools for creating change, and a high school lesson plan that places these issues within the human rights framework.

To see for yourself, you can watch a short version of "Books Not Bars" online at [www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org). The Internet feature includes a background "story" section, links to relevant websites and an opportunity to take action by writing to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in California to demand that they completely reconsider their plan to build a super jail for youth.

According to information from WITNESS, MTV and BET are considering broadcasting "Books Not Bars" on television and online this fall. In anticipation of this broadcast and increased traffic to its website, WITNESS is trying to identify a nationwide network of activists working on prison issues who would be willing to serve as a regional contact for people interested in learning more about these issues. WITNESS "would love to hear from you about the incredible work your group has been doing, as well as your advocacy objectives in the coming months so that we can add your organization to our juvenile justice-related database and direct viewers to you."

WITNESS Program Associate Ronit Avni wants to know if you are interested in using "Books Not Bars" as part of your particular advocacy campaign. WITNESS is providing the video at \$15.00 "for those groups who are effecting change at the grassroots."

Contact Ronit Avni by email: [ronit@witness.org](mailto:ronit@witness.org) or by phone: 212-274-1664, ext 201.

## New websites you want to visit for legal and prison research

Thanks to Brigitte Sarabi of Western Prison Project for telling us about this special website. It appears to encompass many areas of law and expertise that may be useful to anyone who needs to do his/her own legal research without professional help. Check it out.

<http://www.romingerlegal.com>

Another new website with a name that says it all, [Prisonsucks.com](http://www.prisonsucks.com), indexes links to empirical research and fact sheets on prisons and crime control policy. You can sign up on the site to receive regular announcements when new reports are added, about 2-4 times a month. [PrisonSucks.com](http://www.prisonsucks.com) is a Prison Policy Initiative website.

PrisonSucks.com • <http://www.prisonsucks.com>

Prison Policy Initiative • <http://www.prisonpolicy.org>

## Getting back in court on post-conviction: timing is everything

### Defective indictment claims can be harmless now

On May 20, 2002, thousands of federal prisoners with huge sentences were negatively affected by the Supreme Court's unanimous decision in *U.S. v. Cotton*, No. 01-687. Cotton overturned precedent and held that a defective indictment does not deprive the court of jurisdiction. The Court also held that the omission from a federal indictment of a fact that enhances the statutory maximum does not justify vacating the harsher enhanced sentence when the defendants did not object in the trial court.

Incredibly, the Supreme Court made itself into a "factfinder", which is traditionally the role of the trial jury, to claim that the "evidence" [read that as informants' allegations for rewards] was "uncontested" and "overwhelming." It used to be that a defendant could only be tried on the charges determined by the grand jury, and only sentenced for the specific crime found by a properly instructed jury by proof beyond a reasonable doubt, and unanimously. Those protections have been in the Bill of Rights, which were the first ten Amendments to the United States Constitution, to protect citizens from overzealous government officials misusing their powers. It used to be that the burden was on the government to prove a defendant guilty of every element of a crime.

The political pressures on the Supreme Court from angry prosecutors and pro-prosecution judges was certainly great since *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000) was decided. Apprendi relied on tradition and precedent to hold, among other things, "[o]ther than the fact of a prior conviction, any fact that increases the penalty for a crime beyond the prescribed statutory maximum must be submitted to a jury, and proved beyond a reasonable doubt." There was abundant precedent to support the ruling, including *In re Winship*, 397 U.S. 358 (1970)(Rights to Due Process and trial by jury, taken together entitle a criminal defendant to a jury determination that he is guilty of every element of the crime with which he is charged, beyond a reasonable doubt), and *Mullaney v. Wilbur*, 421 U.S. 684 (1975) which applied *Winship* on habeas corpus review.

Most of the circuit courts of appeal bucked the Supreme Court and found Apprendi errors were harmless—even when the Supreme Court had vacated and remanded the cases back to be reviewed "in light of Apprendi." Now that Cotton reduced Apprendi violations to harmless plain errors where there was no objection, there is peace and harmony in the ranks of the judges and prosecutors. Some folks suspect that there is an unwritten rule that judges are supposed to appear impartial while rubberstamping anything the prosecutors do to win.

Since Apprendi, the prosecutors are diligently putting the drug types and quantities in the indictment, jury instructions, and verdict forms to conform to Due Process and the right to a jury trial principles rekindled in Apprendi. However, it seems that the government's prior constitutional violations of defendants' rights to due process and a jury trial on each element of the offense are "harmless" constitutional errors. Imagine Ford claiming its' prior defective cars that caused injuries were "harmless errors" but they will fix the current ones.

Apprendi watchers will note that Cotton held that the standard of "plain error" will be applied when the "error" was not objected to in the trial court, citing *Johnson v. U.S.*, 520 U.S. 461, 466-67 (1997). Thus, the logic flows, if the defendant had objected to the defective indictment before trial, and to the defective jury instructions omitting essential elements, during the jury instruction phase of trial, the errors would be reviewed under the more favorable "harmless error" standard of Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 52(a).

Based on the Cotton decision, it appears that the burden is now on the defendant to timely object and make sure that the government correctly indicts him with all elements of the offense, correctly instructs the jury to find all elements of the offense, and has the correct hearsay about unseen drug amounts to get a maximum sentence. Otherwise, the defendant's failure to timely object to the government constitutional violations during the ruination of his life and family unity is "harmless" error. It used to be that the burden was on the government to charge all elements of the crime, and then instruct the jury to find all elements for guilt and punishment; otherwise it was reversible error. Times have changed. Now its the defendant's fault if he is convicted improperly.

If the defendant timely objects, then the error must be timely raised on direct appeal. If the attorney fails to argue the preserved objection, a default occurs. If the appeal is denied, then a timely post-conviction motion must be filed. But what is "timely" for post-conviction motions varies with the circuits.

Whether you object or not to a defective indictment, the jury instructions, or sentence, the government's opposition on appeal or post-conviction motion will claim that the error is harmless because the "evidence" [allegations by informants] was "uncontested" [even though you pled not guilty], and it was "overwhelming" [because they repeated it]. Those are the buzz-words for the government in most of its oppositions, and they win.

Knowing these opposition buzzwords in advance of your appeal or post-conviction motion can help you craft the right words and argument in your brief to show that you had "vigorously contested the allegations" and the evidence in the case was based on contradictory and inconsistent narratives from unreliable informants, thus far from "overwhelming." Indeed, a defendant might reply to a government opposition that claims the evidence of the crime was "uncontested" and "overwhelming" as nothing more than the prosecutor's closing argument—which the trial judge said was not "evidence" then.

### Section 2255 Deadlines Vary in the Circuits

Is a conviction "final" for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 2255 when the appellate mandate issues on direct appeal, as the Fourth and Seventh Circuit hold, or instead when the defendant's time to petition for certiorari expires, as the Third, Fifth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Circuits hold? That is the question presented in a petition for a writ of certiorari to the United States Supreme Court filed April 5, 2002 from an unpublished denial in *Clay v. U.S.*, from the Seventh Circuit on January 25, 2002.

Of course, the Supreme Court might simply deny certiorari and allow the circuit split to continue. In the meantime, if a defendant misses that filing date by one day, the motion will likely be denied.

The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA) requires that all non-capital state prisoners, all capital prisoners, and all federal prisoners seeking post-conviction petitions and motions make their filing within specified triggering dates. The AEDPA establishes a number of dates for the one-year period and provides that the period "shall run from the latest of" those dates. By far, the triggering date likely to apply to most habeas motions for relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 and § 2255, and their claims, is "the date on which the judgment became final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for seeking such review." See 28 U.S.C. §§ 2244(d)(1), 2255.

The Supreme Court held in *Griffith v. Kentucky*, 479 U.S. 314 (1987) that a federal conviction becomes final when "the availability of appeal had been exhausted, and the time for filing a petition for certiorari elapsed or a petition for certiorari [has been] finally denied."

The Third and Tenth Circuits adhere to the view that direct review concludes and a conviction becomes final when a criminal defendant's options for further direct review are foreclosed, rather than when the highest court to consider the case issues its judgment. Thus, those Courts hold that the



By MICHAEL L MONTALVO, MBA, JD - PRISONER OF THE DRUG WAR

conviction becomes final: (1) when the ninety day period for filing a petition for writ of certiorari expires if the defendant does not seek a writ of certiorari from the Supreme Court, See Supreme Court Rule 13, (2) when the Supreme Court denied the petition for writ of certiorari if such a petition is filed and denied, or (3) when the Supreme Court issues a decision on the merits, if the petition for writ of certiorari is granted and the case proceeds to decision See, *Karpel v. U.S.*, 166 F.3d 565, 577 (3rd Cir. 1998); *U.S. v. Miller*, 197 F.3d 644, 652 n.2 (3rd Cir. 1999); *Rhine v. Boone*, 182 F.3d 1153, 1155 (10th Cir. 1999); *U.S. v. Burch*, 202 F.3d 1274, 1277 (10th Cir. 2000).

The Fifth Circuit, in *U.S. v. Thomas*, 203 F.3d 350, 356 (5th Cir. 2000), saw fit to issue a certificate of appealability solely to determine when a federal conviction becomes final for purposes of § 2255 ¶16 (1). In Thomas, the two defendants filed their § 2255 motions one year and three days after the Court denied their petitions for certiorari. In maintaining that their § 2255 motions were timely, they contended that their judgements of conviction did not become final until the court of appeals received notice from the Supreme Court that their petitions for certiorari had been denied.

Alternatively, they claimed that their convictions did not become final until the twenty-five day period prescribed by Supreme Court Rule 44 (for the filing of a petition for rehearing of the denial of certiorari) had actually expired. The Thomas Court rejected both of these contentions. Relying on Rule 16.3, it concluded that when a defendant petitions for certiorari, his judgement of conviction "becomes final for purposes of the one year limitation period set forth in § 2255(1) on the date that the Supreme Court denied the defendant's petition for writ of certiorari on direct review." *Id.* at 356.

It should be noted that the Fifth Circuit in Thomas did not address time of finality to start the one-year date to file the § 2255 motion when the defendant does not file a petition for writ of certiorari. However, in dicta, the Thomas Court stated it found the Third Circuit's position persuasive that the one-year date begins to run only after the time for filing a petition for a writ of certiorari. The Fifth Circuit answered that issue in *U.S. v. Gamble*, 208 F.3d 536, 536-537 (5th Cir. 2000) which relied on Thomas to hold that a defendant's conviction becomes final, and the one-year limitations period for filing a § 2255 motion begins to run upon the expiration of time for seeking certiorari in the United States Supreme Court, even when the defendant has not actually filed a petition for certiorari.

The Ninth Circuit in *U.S. v. Colvin*, 204 F.3d 1221, 1225 (9th Cir. 2000) had to decide when the "judgement of conviction becomes final for purposes of the statute of limitations under 28 U.S.C. § 2255 when that Court had partially affirms and partially reverses a conviction and remands to the district court with instructions to amend the judgment. Rejecting the district court's ruling, the Ninth Circuit held to the traditional view that a judgment becomes final when the time has passed for appealing the district court's entry of the

judgment, in this case an amended judgment. For example, a defendant who won a remand to be resentenced would have finality postponed until after the appeal of the resentence.

However, the Colvin Court was careful to state that its decision did not affect those cases in which the Court affirms the judgment and conviction in its entirety and there is no express remand to the district court. The Colvin Court stated it was leaving that issue for another day as presented in the conflict between the Third and Tenth Circuits with the Seventh Circuit. A few months later, that issue left open in Colvin was determined by the Ninth Circuit in *U.S. v. Garcia*, 210 F.3d 1058, 1059 (9th Cir. 2000).

The Garcia Court conducted statutory analysis of the pertinent part of the § 2255 provision for the one-year limitation. The district court of Judge M.D. Crocker in Fresno, California, an elderly conservative, interpreted "final" to mean the date that the court of appeals affirms the judgment of conviction. On appeal, both parties contended the judge was wrong and that a judgment is "final" only when the time for seeking certiorari review by the Supreme Court has expired. This date is 90 days after entry of the court of appeals judgement (note that "entry" is different from the date the mandate is issued; 21 days later). See, Supreme Court Rule 13.3, "The time to file a petition for a writ of certiorari runs from the date of entry of the judgment or order sought to be reviewed, and not from the issuance date of the mandate."

Following the Supreme Court's definition of finality in *Griffith v. Kentucky*, supra, the Ninth Circuit held in Garcia "that the one-year limitations period for a federal prisoner who does not file a petition for a writ of certiorari begins to run when the time for filing the petition expires." Garcia, 210 F.3d at 1060. With Garcia, the Ninth Circuit joined the Third (Kapral) and the Tenth (Burch) Circuits, in conflict with the Seventh.

Finally, the Eleventh Circuit joined the fray. Earlier, in *Adams v. U.S.*, 173 F.3d 1339 (11th Cir. 1999), the Court had noted, but not decided the question of the date the one-year period starts. However, in *Washington v. U.S.*, 243 F.3d 1299, 1300 (11th Cir. 2001), the Court, in a brief per curiam opinion, also concluded that prisoner's judgment of conviction becomes final when the Supreme Court denies his petition for a writ of certiorari, or issues a decision on the merits, joining the Fifth Circuit in Thomas, supra; the Third Circuit in Kapral, supra; *U.S. v. Marcella*, 212 F.3d 1005, 1008 (7th Cir. 2000); *Rogers v. U.S.*, 180 F.3d 349, 352 (1st Cir. 1999); and *U.S. v. Simmons*, 111 F.3d 737, 744 (10th Cir. 1997).

The § 2255 defendant in Washington also prevailed on his claim that his § 2255 motion was timely filed under the "mailbox rule". The "mailbox rule" for prisoners means that their motions and notices to the courts are considered filed when they give them to the prison authorities sealed in envelopes with proper postage affixed. See, *Houston v. Lack*, 487 U.S. 266, 273 (1988). Even the government conceded Washington's motion was timely under the mailbox rule.

*Continued on next page*

## Sentencing Guidelines update

FROM FEDCURE

The following is a short summary and a portion of the text from the Amendments to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines that became effective November 1, 2002.

The complete text of the Amendments can be found at [www.ussc.gov](http://www.ussc.gov). Amendment IV has the most significant impact on federal prison issues. This amendment effectively established a cap or ceiling for low level drug offenders based solely on drug quantity for defendants deemed minor participants.



This amendment strikes a balance between drug quantity and defendants' participation. The amendment prevents low level drug offenders' base sentences from being above level 30 based on the drug quantity.

Amendment IV will not result in wholesale changes to drug sentences.

The only defendants covered by it are those found by a court to have been minor or minimal participants in drug offenses. While the amendment would cap their base offense level at 30, it does not prohibit a judge from increasing the sentence based on any other factor the court deems appropriate. The Sentencing Commission estimates that only six percent of all drug defendants -those who receive a minimal role adjustment -will qualify, approximately 240 people each year.

While this is a victory for those of us who oppose mandatory minimum sentences, it is not enough. We must not become complacent, but must remain vigilant as we continue to urge both Congress and the Sentencing Commission to not only address sentencing factors, but to reinstitute parole in the federal system in order to correct what can only be called draconian sentences of many current federal inmates.

### §2C1.1.

DRUG TRAFFICKING - The amendment modifies §2D1.1(a)(3) to provide a maximum base offense level of level 30 if the defendant receives an adjustment under §3B1.2 (Mitigating Role). This limits the sentencing impact of drug quantity for offenders who perform relatively low level trafficking functions, have little authority in the organization, and have a lower degree of individual culpability. The amendment also modifies the maximum base offense under subsection (a)(2) of §2D1.8 (Renting or Managing a Drug Establishment; Attempt or Conspiracy) from offense level 16 to offense level 26. Although these offenders may not participate directly in the underlying controlled substance offense, they knowingly and intentionally facilitate and profit, at least indirectly, from the trafficking of illegal drugs. Additionally, the amendment (1) revises the Typical Weight Per Unit (Dose, Pill, or Capsule) Table in §2D1.1 to reflect more accurately the type and weight of ecstasy pills typically trafficked and consumed by adding a reference for MDMA, with a typical weight of 250 milligrams; (2) revises the typical weight for MDA from 100 milligrams of the actual controlled substance to 250 milligrams of the mixture or substance containing the controlled substance; and (3) clarifies that the two level reduction under §2D1.1(b)(6) for defendants who meet the criteria set forth in §5C1.2 (Limitation on Applicability of Statutory Minimum Sentences in Certain Cases) does not depend on whether the defendant is convicted under a statute that carries a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment.

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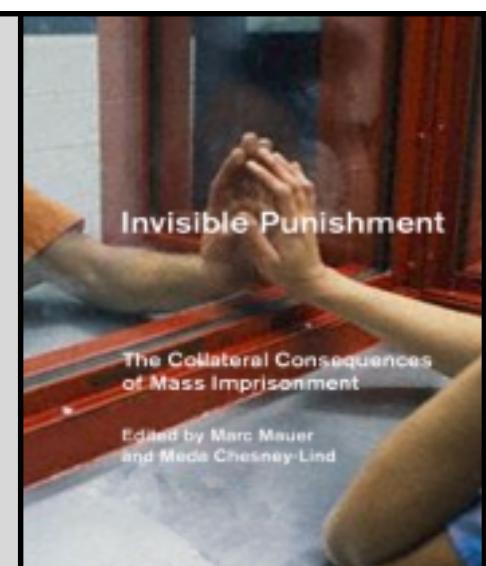
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## Law Library continued from page 20

The Second Circuit in *Williams v. Artuz*, 237 F.3d 147, 151 (2d Cir. 2001) held that the limitations period for state prisoners begins to run only after the denial of certiorari or the expiration of time for seeking certiorari.

The Sixth Circuit in *Bronaugh v. Ohio*, 235 F.3d 280, 283-86 (6th Cir. 2000) held: (1) the one-year statute of limitations began to run on the day after the last day on which the petitioner could have filed a petition for writ of certiorari for direct review in the Supreme Court; (2) Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 6(a) applies for computing that the statute of limitation begins to run on the day *after* the expiration of time for seeking certiorari, and (3) the limitations period was tolled even longer because the petitioner's out-of-time motion in state court to reopen direct appeal "should be considered part of the direct review process," not collateral review.

The cases above give the defendant the benefit of 3-months extra time to file a § 2255 motion. The most stingy approach is that of the Seventh and Fourth Circuits when the § 2255 movant has not filed a petition for writ of certiorari after direct appeal.

In *U.S. v. Torres*, 211 F.3d 836, 839 (4th Cir. 2000) the Court concluded that when a federal prisoner does not petition for certiorari in the Supreme Court, his judgment of conviction becomes final under § 2255 ¶6(1) upon the issuance by a court of appeal of the mandate contemplated by Rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure. Since *Torres* had not sought certiorari the court had no reason to address the potential effect of a petition for writ of certiorari. However, the Fourth Circuit answered that issue in *U.S. v. Segers*, 271 F.3d 181 (4th Cir. 2001).

The *Segers* Court adopted the ruling in *Horton v. U.S.*, 244 F.3d 546 (7th Cir. 2001) where the Seventh Circuit dealt with a dismissal of a § 2255 motion filed one year and two days after the Supreme Court denied certiorari. *Horton* maintained that his § 2255 motion was timely filed because his judgment of conviction did not become final until expiration of the twenty-five day period within which he could petition for reconsideration of the denial of certiorari. The Seventh Circuit, relying on Supreme Court Rule 16.3, rejected *Horton*'s contention, and held that a "defendant's conviction becomes "final" under § 2255 ¶6(1) when the Supreme Court denied the defendant's petition for writ of certiorari (absent a suspension order from the Court or a Justice), irrespective of the opportunity to petition the Supreme Court for rehearing."

Based on the *Horton* case, the Fourth Circuit denied *Segers* a certificate of appealability because his judgement of conviction became final on November 16, 1998, when the Supreme Court denied his petition for a writ of certiorari, and he did not file his § 2255 motion until January 20, 2000—more than a year later.

The AEDPA § 2255 has a one-year limitation date from the several other events as well. But it is risky for a defendant to sit on good issues and miss the earliest filing date, such as the finality of the conviction. Because of the significant difference in the circuits on "finality" of conviction for the one-year date, varying from 12 to 15 months, a defendant needs to know what his or her personal deadline is. To recap:

1. When a defendant does not file an appeal, the one-year date runs either from the date of sentence, or the expiration of the ten days to have filed the notice of appeal. To be safe, use the earlier date.

2. When a defendant does file a direct appeal and is denied relief, but does not file for certiorari, there are two rules. In the Fourth and Seventh Circuits, the one-year date starts when the court of appeals issues the mandate after entry of the denial. *U.S. v. Torres*, 211 F.3d 836, 839 (4th Cir. 2000); *Gendron v. U.S.*, 154 F.3d 672, 674-75 (7th Cir. 1998).

However, in the Second, Third, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Circuits the one-year date starts when the 90-days time to seek certiorari expires. *Williams v. Artuz*, 237 F.3d 147, 151 (2nd Cir. 2001); *Kapral v. U.S.*, 166 F.3d 565, 575 (3rd Cir. 1999); *U.S. v. Gamble*, 208 F.3d 536 (5th Cir. 2000); *Bronaugh v. Ohio*, 235 F.3d 280, 283-86 (6th Cir. 2000); *Stead v. U.S.*, 67 F.Supp.2d 1064, 1072 (D.S.D. 1999)(citing *Moore v. U.S.*, 173 F.3d 1131, 1134 (8th Cir. 1999); *U.S. v. Burch*, 202 F.3d 1274, 1277-78 (10th Cir. 2000); and *Kaufmann v. U.S.*, 282 F.3d 1336 (11th Cir. 2002).

3. In case where the defendant filed a petition for certiorari after being denied on direct appeal, all circuits hold that the date of the denial of certiorari, or a decision of the Supreme Court, is the start date of the one-year to file the § 2255 motion.

4. However, many defendants who are denied certiorari file for a rehearing, or rely on Supreme Court Rule 44 for the 25-day period to file for rehearing of the denial. The Third, Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, and Tenth Circuits had denied such claims to extend the one-year date the extra 25 days. *Kapral v. U.S.*, *supra*; *U.S. v. Segers*, *supra*; *U.S. v. Thomas*, *supra*; *Horton v. U.S.*, *supra*, and *U.S. v. Willis*, 202 F.3d 1279, 1280-81 (10th Cir. 2000)

5. If the defendant wins a remand on direct appeal for an amended judgment or resentencing, the one-year date for § 2255 g6(1) purposes of finality does not start until the new judgment or resentencing is final, or after direct appeal of that resentence, including either the 90-days to file for certiorari, or after the denial of certiorari. See, *Burriss v. Parke*, 95 F.3d 465, 467 (7th Cir. 1996)(en banc); *Hepburn v. Moore*, 215 F.3d 1208, 1209 (11th Cir. 2000); and *U.S. v. Colvin*, 204 F.3d 1221 (9th Cir. 2000)

6. Some circuits hold that under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 6(a), the one-year statute of limitations begins to run the day *after* expiration of time to seek certiorari or the denial of a petition for certiorari, giving the movant one extra day. See *Bronaugh v. Ohio*, *supra*; *U.S. v. Marcello*, *supra*.

The courts have no mercy for the § 2255 movant who is one day late, and you can be sure that the prosecution will make that lateness its' first ground to dismiss the motion as "untimely."

For example, I recently reviewed a district court's denial of a § 2255 motion in *U.S. v. Michael Raven* where the attorney had mistakenly believed that the one-year limit to file the § 2255 motion under Fifth Circuit law started 90 days after the date the *mandate* was issued on the direct appeal. The district court held that defendant *Raven* was time-barred, and his life sentence for a drug conspiracy must stand. Even with an affidavit by the attorney confessing his mistake, the § 2255 court refused to reconsider its order that the motion was time-barred.

There is no justice in the war on drugs.

## Journey for Justice—Detroit, MI 10/12/02 Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) speaking at Mercy Law School Forum



This advertisement appeared in the National Review, the The New Republic, the American Prospect, the Weekly Standard, The Nation, Reason Magazine and The Progressive in the summer of 2002.—Ad by Common Sense for Drug Policy

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<sup>1</sup> Beck Alan. J. Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1999. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, April, 2000; Maguire, Kathleen and Ann. L. Pastore, editors Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1998. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Profile of Jail Inmates 1996 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, April 1996), pp. 1, 4; Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 1996 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1997), pp. 10-11; Criminal Justice Institute, Inc.: Camp, George M. and Camp, Camille Graham. The Corrections Yearbook, 1998. Middletown, Connecticut: Criminal Justice Institute, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> US Dept of Justice, An analysis of non-violent drug offenders with minimal criminal histories, DOJ executive summary, Feb 4, 1994. "Since the end of 1988, when the full impact of these new laws was realized, the prison population has grown by an average of over 650 inmates per month, or enough to fill one medium size institution with each new month." (p. 13)

<sup>4</sup> Cal Thomas, "Radical Recruiting in US Prisons", Lancaster New Era, June 22, 2002.

## Journey for Justice—Bethesda, MD, 11/3/02 Unitarian Universalist Church Forum and Display



# I Got Published

The Anson Record  
Wednesday, March 6, 2002

## Drug Policy is Doomed to Fail

Yet another president is paying lip service to the nation's drug policy. Mr. Bush's announcement of his plans to cut drug abuse by 25 percent in five years and seek a 10 percent drop in drug abuse in two years will, according to history, fail.

Some drug abuse may be an individual tragedy, but to say that illegal drug use robs men and women of their dignity, character and leads them to lives with no ambition and hope is far from the mark and nothing short of a narrow-minded generalization. What about the men and women who have admitted to drug use and now run this country in some fashion?

This country doesn't need money poured into a black hole policy that gobbles it up and spits out failure. This country needs a new approach. A good place to start is education. We need honesty about which drugs are more dangerous. We need to stop grouping all drugs together and teach children the difference. If adults do not treat marijuana and heroin differently, why be surprised kids don't?

Bush's treatment policy has yet to be seen, but enough of the money is spent for law enforcement to provide a treatment slot for every addict in this country. He makes it sound as though families and religious institutions need to be told to love someone with a drug problem.

This nation's drug policy needs to be led away from politicians and military men and placed in the scientific and medical communities which have made recommendations over the past 30 years, almost all of which were ignored. Pouring money into the present policy will fail.

I am a Federal inmate at the F.P.C. Seymour Johnson in Goldsboro, N.C.

**James L. Mooring**  
Goldsboro

NEWS-SUN, Hobbs, New Mexico  
January, 2002

## Inmates' Children Face Big Problems

I consider myself somewhat of an expert on prisons, prisoners and the war on drugs, having been a drug addict since 1972 and a prisoner of the drug war for more than 20 years of my life. I have served time in various state and federal prisons all over the United States and am completely familiar with the realities of drug prohibition and its collateral damage to the community of the United States.

In establishing my credentials, for a prisoner, I am well educated and as a U.S. citizen, I have lived the life of the war on drugs, not just read about it or viewed "snippets" of some of the battles. I have experienced the war as a soldier on the side of traditional American freedom and justice and live with it on a daily basis.

After reading an AP article entitled, "New attention for children of prisoners" in early January, I was certainly grateful to learn that someone has finally awoken to the fact this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. I certainly believe, from personal observation, that a child raised by a drug addict has a far greater chance of living a productive and law-abiding life over one whose parent or parents have been made a prisoner by the state or government, leaving them an orphan. Should a study of this be done in an honest and factual manner I am certain that the results will support what I have observed over the past 30 years.

When the state or government imprisons the parent(s) of a child, leaving them to whatever meager services offered for orphans, the child will not only suffer the loss of the parent's physical support of life's necessities, but the emotional loss of love and companionship. In most instances, this leads the child to resent, and even hate, the state and government and then manifest these negative emotions into the endless cycle of lawlessness and drug abuse.

While at the same time, a child of a drug addict learns, with the proper guidance that is sometimes available, that drug use only leads to addiction, and they normally learn to avoid the behavior of their parents as a survival technique. The child of a drug addict who lives with the drug addict learns to hate the drug that seems to be harming the parent. The child of the imprisoned drug addict learns to hate the state and government who seem to harm the parent.

If we are not yet able to see the truths of the war on drugs and drug addiction clearly at this time to make the necessary adjustments, such as placing drug addicts and drug-addicted, low-level dealers in treatment in a community setting with their children, then we MUST do whatever is necessary to ensure that their children have the tools, materials and education to survive the incarceration of their parents without being condemned to repeat it.

**Ethan E. Roberts**  
Big Spring, Texas

Richmond Free Press  
Sunday, July 14, 2002

## Drug War a Failure

This is what America's "drug war" has produced over the last 30 years: 1.5 million prisoners with a budget that has gone from \$500 million to more than \$30 billion per year since 1970.

It has turned the once relatively safe, united African communities into war zones. Just as America's alcohol prohibition did in the 1920s, today's drug prohibition laws cause more harms to society than the substances themselves.

It's way past time to expose the lies that America has spread about the dangers of drug use.

**Kwame D. Binta I, Richmond VA**

## I Got Published TNC!

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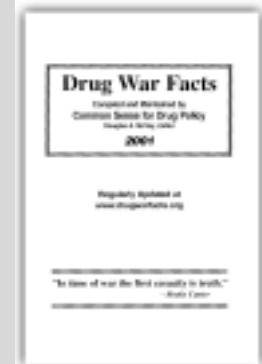
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Tue, 26 Mar 2002, *The Capital Times*, (WI)

## Political Activism, Jocko's Style

By Doug Moe

BOB "Boot" Schuh, erstwhile owner of the erstwhile Jocko's bar, is serving a 19-year drug sentence in a federal prison in Milan, Michigan. Schuh has begun sending out correspondence under the letterhead of The November Coalition, a Washington state-based nonprofit organization that finds nothing at all to admire about the government's war on drugs. "The drug war does not reduce drug use," the group's Web site notes. "Choosing to wage a 'war' on drugs stimulates a violent, underground economy which would collapse if drug prohibition ended."

The November Coalition is made up of drug prisoners, their friends and families. Schuh's March 19 letter—co-signed with another prisoner, Glenn Early—cautions against adoption of a proposed U.S. Senate bill authored by Jeff Sessions of Alabama and Orrin Hatch of Utah, the so-called Drug Sentencing Reform Act. "Real reform of the failed War on Drugs would be the elimination of unreasonably harsh sentences for nonviolent drug offenders," Schuh and Early write.

Thu, 20 Jun 2002, *The Capital Times* (WI)

## 'Boot' gets Another Day in Court

By Doug Moe

BOB "BOOT" SCHUH will be back in Madison next week. Currently living in a federal prison in Michigan, Schuh will be here Wednesday for resentencing by U.S. Judge John Shabaz, whose original 19-year sentencing of Schuh - the former Jocko's owner - on drug charges was partially vacated by a federal appellate court last month in Chicago.

The appellate court tossed the portion of Schuh's sentence asserting he had a leadership role in the drug dealing at Jocko's.

Schuh's appellate lawyer, Robert Henak of Milwaukee, said Schuh was very pleased by the ruling. "We both were," Henak said Wednesday. Henak said that federal guidelines dictate Schuh's new sentence at somewhere between 10 and 12 years. "He's also eligible for a 16 percent reduction in sentence each year - after the first year - for good behavior," Henak said. That works out to between 51 and 53 days a year. Along with receiving a revised presentence report, Shabaz on Wednesday will hear arguments from prosecutors and Henak before pronouncing the new sentence. Since his incarceration, Schuh has been active in the November Coalition, an organization devoted to rethinking the wisdom of lengthy prison terms for nonviolent drug offenders.

Fort Dodge Messenger, June 29, 2002

## A Prisoner Responds

After reading the "Where to cut costs" letter from Jeff Simkins, June 19 *Messenger*, I am compelled to respond. Thinking the state can balance its books by eliminating pay to inmates - many who earn 28 cents per hour - is a ludicrous proposition at best.

Pay for electricity? Inmates pay what amounts to a 12% tax on many commissary items. That's 6% sales tax. Plus 6% 'pay for stay' fee. The 'pay for stay' fee is applied to the electrical appliance purchases as well.

Furthermore, the state skims 5% from money deposited to inmate telephone accounts, then charges a minimum of \$2.19 for the first minute of a call. Most 15-minute phone calls cost approximately \$5. Profits from phone calls are used to pay for inmate recreation. How dangerous would your job be without inmate recreation?

I agree with you that "Pushing an inmate to go through (drug) treatment as a condition of parole or early release is counter productive." Providing coerced treatment at a time when the needs for voluntary treatment are not being met creates the strange circumstance of someone needing to get arrested to get treatment.

People who are forced into treatment may not actually need it. They may just be people who use drugs in a non-problematic way, but who happened to get arrested. Arrest is not the best way to determine who should get treatment services. Arrest and a felony conviction only serve to further stigmatize an individual who suffers a substance abuse problem.

I have long advocated for the legalization and taxation of drugs currently illegal. This approach in my opinion, would better address any drug abuse problems within our society. It would also free up approximately 2,000 prison beds in the state of Iowa. Each prison bed costs more than \$20,000 per bed per year.

Until such measures are implemented, I will be wasting about one million of your tax dollars during the course of my 40-year sentence for marijuana convictions.

Bradley David Aukes - Prisoner of the Drug War

## Politics make a Federal Case out of it Ask why more Wyoming Women are Convicted

Jackie Quarterman: Perspective

We constantly read letters and columns bemoaning the fact that young people and others are leaving the state of Wyoming. We also read Dave Freudenthal's ad campaign for governor: "Attention drug pushers—time is running out! Wyoming will have a new governor soon and your days are numbered!"

We, 11 Wyoming women who live in Phoenix Federal Prison Camp, would like to tell the good people of Wyoming what we've learned through our process of conviction and incarceration.

First of all, a very disproportionate number of Wyoming residents are in prison (leave the state not by their own choice), and secondly, Dave Freudenthal can accurately brag about his last "seven and one-half years of locking people up" because he certainly has had a hand in the hugely discrepant number of Wyoming federal prisoners who are locked up for years. Heaven help us if this number continues to rise, as Freudenthal promises. The current statistics already indicate that Wyoming has the most federal prisoners per capita in the United States. Does this mean that Wyoming is the most crime-ridden state? We don't think so.

We've discovered that many of the cases made into federal in Wyoming should not have been federal cases - they should have remained under Wyoming state jurisdiction, where most of us would have received treatment and /or probation, rather than excessive years in prison.

We've also learned that the federal system can convict (much easier) people of conspiracy on hearsay evidence; conspiracy just means being aware of a crime. Over 50 percent of the women in federal prisons are in on "conspiracy," period! We also know that Wyoming has an exceptional number of women prisoners - not just a discrepancy in wages (between women and men). The predominant means of obtaining convictions in the federal system is by paid-for testimony (paid informants usually paid for with freedom or a huge reduction of their own sentence), so it is often the big dealers who testify against the insignificant users or supposed conspirators (all known by the prosecution).

David Burnham contemplated in his book, "Above the Law," why Wyoming was allotted such a disproportionate amount of money for federal prosecutions. He explained in his book that there is no correlation between federal prosecution funds for states and population or crime rate - it's all politics, he says. Of course, to justify huge allotments of federal money, there have to be results (federal cases are easy to create through entrapment, conspiracy and paid informants). We do know that of the 170 women (from all over the United States) at this federal camp, 11 of us are from Wyoming (and we hear three more Wyoming women are on their way here, and we know there are many more Wyoming women other federal prisons). Does this seem strange? That 6.8 percent of this camp are from Wyoming? While Wyoming is only 0.0017 percent of the U.S. population? We

know that there have been over 1,400 federal convictions in Wyoming from 1997 until now. (The Wyoming federal court said they had no way of tracking the number of current federal prisoners. Strange?)

At this camp the only other state that comes close to our number is Texas - El Paso, a border town, convicts a number of federal prisoners - but those women, involved in much larger amounts of drugs, receive much small sentences than we Wyoming drug prisoners (two of we 11 are not drug cases).

Of we 11, our years served back-to-back would amount to 68 and one-half years. The cost to the taxpayers to house we 11 nonviolent Wyoming women will be over \$1.5 million; much more than that will be spent on our children. That emotional and financial cost will be impossible to calculate. We 11 women have a total of 20 children who have experienced the forced abandonment by their mothers - some of the children have even had to be housed in other states - but all of them are far away from us 9 the mothers that love them dearly). All statistics indicate that our children will have a much higher chance of ending up in prison, also. One of our friends teaches kindergarten in Wyoming and says that a few years ago there were eight children in her class who had one or both parents in prison.

We know that even most Wyoming state prisoners are being shipped away to Colorado, Oklahoma and Virginia at great expense - shipped far away from their families. Does this practice even hint of humaneness?

The vast majority of Wyoming federal prisoners are in prison for "drug" crimes, which, simply put, are prohibition crimes. The vast majority are nonviolent, first-time offenders. Yet many murder cases go unsolved in Wyoming. How can this be a legacy to brag about? Is this the kind of legacy that the good people of Wyoming really want?

America already has over 2 million people in prison - more than any country in the world, in the history of the world! Now, Wyoming can claim an exceptional amount of those 2 million (most of which are prohibition criminals).

Freudenthal's campaign should be to reduce the number of Wyoming people locked up and increase treatment for those who need it - not continuing to lock up nonviolent prisoners for countless years. We, who are going to prison in droves, do have family and friends who are witnessing the overload.

P.S. The two white-collar inmates did not sign, knowing their sentences are more than fair and significantly lower than when the word "drug" is there.

*Jackie Quarterman is from Sheridan. The column was also signed by Andrea Asch, Velvet Boatman, Teresa Fernandez and Diane Raidall of Casper; Sharon Martinez of Riverton and Marci Kelly of Green River.*

# Tips for getting letters to the editor published

ROBERT SHARPE, M.P.A. PROGRAM OFFICER, DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE

• In general, letters written in response to editorials are more likely to be published than letters written in response to wire stories (does not apply to major news stories). Avoid scathing criticism. Civility will increase the likelihood of your views being published.

• Respond to major news stories while they are still hot. Nonetheless, investing time in editing pays off. Always spell-check your letter.

• Local newspapers are far more likely to publish letters than out-of-state papers (does not apply to major newspapers).

• Adding local relevance helps, especially when replying to an AP wire story (use the MAP search functions). Repeat information found in the article if necessary.

• Including credible statistics to make a point helps, especially when government statistics are used (see <http://www.drugwarfacts.org/>). Include links to government websites whenever possible.

• Write with a specific target audience in mind, i.e. soccer moms, fiscal conservatives, etc.

• Tailor letters for specific newspapers. If you're going to write to the Wall Street Journal you can be pedantic, but you'd better dumb it down for certain papers. You're always better off preempting editors.

• Use an organizational affiliation if possible. Consider starting a local drug policy organization, if only to get the reform message out.

• Most newspapers require that letters submitted be exclusive. When recycling letters make slight edits. Having the exact same letter published in both the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun on the same day would not be good. Having the exact same letter simultaneously published in Alabama and Idaho should not pose a problem.

• It's important to keep track of when you last sent a particular newspaper a letter. Likewise, avoid sending the same letter to the same newspaper twice. Anything that indicates you've got a system in place will hurt your chances of getting published.

• Last but definitely not least, visit the newspaper's website and find out what their policy is for publishing letters. In general, letters should be under 250 words. The shorter the letter, the greater the chance of it being published. Most papers will edit letters down to less than 200 words anyway. You're better off aiming for roughly 20 words and sticking to one or two key points. There are many brilliant activists out there who would be published far more often if they just shortened their letters.

From Media Awareness Project  
[www.mapinc.org](http://www.mapinc.org)



## Updated Drug War Facts

COMPILED AUGUST 2002 BY DOUGLAS A. MCVAY FOR COMMON SENSE FOR DRUG POLICY

1. "Prisoners sentenced for drug offenses constitute the largest group of Federal inmates (57%) in 2000, up from 53% in 1990 (table 20). On September 30, 2000, the date of the latest available data in the Federal Justice Statistics Program, Federal prisons held 73,389 sentenced drug offenders, compared to 30,470 at yearend 1990."

*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Allen J. Beck, PhD, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 14.*

2. In 2000, drug law violators comprised 21% of all adults serving time in State prisons - 251,100 out of 1,206,400 State prison inmates.

*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Allen J. Beck, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 12 & Table 17, p. 13.*

3. Over 80% of the increase in the federal prison population from 1985 to 1995 was due to drug convictions.

*Source: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 1996 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, 1997).*

4. "Between 1984 and 1999, the number of defendants charged with a drug offense in U.S. district courts increased about 3% annually, on average, from 11,854 to 29,306."

*Source: Scalia, John, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Federal Drug Offenders, 1999 with Trends 1984-99 (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, August 2001), p. 7.*

5. "As a result of increased prosecutions and longer time served in prison, the number of drug offenders in Federal prisons increased more than 12% annually, on average, from 14,976 during 1986 to 68,360 during 1999."

*Source: Scalia, John, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Federal Drug Offenders, 1999 with Trends 1984-99 (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, August 2001), p. 7.*

6. All major Western European nations' incarceration rates are about or below 100 per 100,000. In the United States, in 2001, the incarceration rate for African-American women was 199 per 100,000, and for African-American men 3,535 per 100,000. The rate of incarceration for Hispanic women is 61 per 100,000, and for Hispanic men the rate is 1,177 per 100,000. The rate of incarceration for white women is 36 per 100,000, and for white men the rate is 462 per 100,000.

*Sources: Currie, E., Crime and Punishment in America, New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, Inc. (1998), p. 15;*

*and Harrison, Paige M. & Beck, Allen J., PhD, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 12, table 16.*

7. "Overall, the United States incarcerated 2,100,146 persons at yearend 2001." This total represents persons held in:

Federal and State Prisons: 1,324,465 (which excludes State and Federal prisoners in local jails)

Territorial Prisons: 15,852

Local Jails: 631,240

Facilities operated by or exclusively for the US INS: 8,761

Military Facilities: 2,436

Jails in Indian Country: 1,912

Juvenile Facilities: 108,965 (as of October 1999)

*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Beck, Allen J., PhD., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 1.*

8. "The rate of incarceration in prison and jail was 686 inmates per 100,000 residents in 2001, up from 601 in 1995. At yearend 2001, 1 in every 146 US residents were incarcerated in State or Federal prison or a local jail."

*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Beck, Allen J., PhD., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 2.*

9. The U.S. nonviolent prisoner population is larger than the combined populations of Wyoming and Alaska.

*Source: John Irwin, Ph. D., Vincent Schiraldi, and Jason Ziedenberg, America's One Million Nonviolent Prisoners (Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 1999), pg. 4.*

10. "Since 1995 the sentenced inmate population in State prisons has grown 21% (table 5). During this period 10 States increased their sentenced inmate populations by at least 50%, led by North Dakota (up 87%), Idaho (up 81%), and Oregon (up 75%). Between 1995 and 2001 the Federal system reported an additional 52,846 inmates sentenced to more than year [sic], an increase of 63%."

*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Beck, Allen J., PhD, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 5.*

11. "While the State sentenced prison population rose 0.3% during 2001, the sentenced Federal prison population grew 9.2%. The Federal

prison system added 11,465 sentenced prisoners—the equivalent of more than 220 new inmates per week."

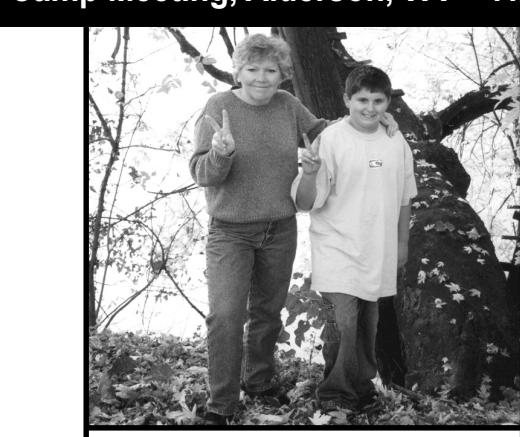
*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Allen J. Beck, Allen J., PhD, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 4.*

12. According to the US Justice Department, between 1990 and 2000 "Overall, the percentage of violent Federal inmates declined from 17% to 10%. While the number of offenders in each major offense category increased, the number incarcerated for a drug offense accounted for the largest percentage of the total growth (59%), followed by public-order offenders (32%)."

*Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Allen J. Beck, Allen J., PhD, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2001 (Washington DC: US Department of Justice, July 2002), p. 14.*

These facts and much more are available online at: <http://www.drugwarfacts.org>—Questions, comments or suggestions for additions and modifications may be addressed to Doug McVay at: [dmcvay@drugwarfacts.org](mailto:dmcvay@drugwarfacts.org)

### Camp Meeting, Alderson, WV—11/8/02



Nora Callahan and Rudy Godzak, Jr.

# IN THE NEWS



## Seven-fold jump in parolees sent back to prison since 1980

The number of parole violators returned to state prisons exploded from 27,000 in 1980 to 203,000 in 2000, a 652 percent increase, according to a new analysis of U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS] data by the Urban Institute. The 2000 figure surpasses 1980's total prison admissions of 169,000, say Jeremy Travis and Sarah Lawrence, researchers from the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center. Parole violators, they note, made up 35 percent of prison admissions in 1999, double 1980's 17 percent. "Beyond the Prison Gates: The State of Parole in America" uses the latest BJS figures to document the declining role of parole boards in deciding whether prisoners are released, the increasing reliance on parole supervision, and the unprecedented growth in parole revocations leading to returns to prison.

## DEA's Hutchinson moves to Homeland Security

Drug Enforcement Administration chief Asa Hutchinson will be leaving the never-ending drug war next month to help prosecute the never-ending "war on terror." He has been nominated to be Undersecretary for Border and Transportation Security in the mammoth new Homeland Security Department, and appears to be a shoo-in for the job. He is expected to leave the DEA and prepare to take over that position in January 2003. The new department will not begin operations until March.

The Washington Times reported that DEA Deputy Administrator John Bert Brown III, in line to take over as interim DEA head, also has the inside track to permanently replace Hutchinson. According to the Post, Brown is a career drug warrior.

## Wisconsin rave rebellion

Racine, WI, police must have thought they scored a major coup when they raided what they described as a "rave" organized by a local civic organization early in the morning of November 3. But only months after the raid went down, it is turning into a major embarrassment instead—one that could end up digging deep into the pockets of local taxpayers, according to the Racine Journal Press.

It all began when Racine police infiltrated a benefit for the Uptown Theatre Group. Officers allegedly observed people making drug transactions and arrested three of them. It was their next move that sparked outrage and controversy. They then barred the doors and cited everyone in attendance—some 445 people, some from as far away as St. Louis and Chicago—for being present in a "disorderly house," a \$968 ticket. That was too much for the Uptown Theatre Group and for most of the ticketed attendees. As they complained loudly and vigorously, the word began to spread in the electronic music community and among civil liberties groups.

By December, groups including the Wisconsin ACLU, the national ACLU's Drug Policy Litigation Project and the Electronic Music Defense and Education Fund, an affiliate of the Drug Policy Alliance, had joined forces with local attorneys and angry show-goers to start making life miserable for the city of Racine.

After receiving numerous complaints, the Wisconsin ACLU investigated. "The city of Racine needs to drop those charges and apologize," said the group's lead attorney, Micabil Diaz. He said the same thing in a letter sent last week to the city of Racine. He hasn't yet received a response as of this writing.

The local DA, hoping to make the hubbub go away, offered to reduce the fines to \$100, but that wasn't good enough for the busted music fans. As the first batch of ticketed partiers appeared for their first hearings on the charges, legal teams outside the courthouse provided them with information about their legal options and the possible consequences of their choices. At the end of the day, 166 people had appeared for their hearings. Only 19 took the \$100 "no contest" plea offer, while a whopping 147 people pled not guilty and demanded jury trials. Almost 300 people have yet to make an appearance, but advocates expect to see a similar percentage demanding their day in court.

Local attorney Eric Guenther, who is representing the Uptown Theatre and several of those ticketed that night, stated, "The police conduct was an outrageous violation of First Amendment rights to freedom of assembly and speech."

"Racine will pay a price if it attempts to prosecute these cases", said Guenther. "The city is saying it will have to hire a special prosecutor to handle the caseload, and it will have to pay huge overtime costs for police officers to testify in hundreds of trials."

This is in addition to a possible civil suit against the city, filed by theatre director Gary Newman, who claims the raid and arrests damaged the group's reputation and ability to raise funds for the theatre's renovation, a two-year-old project. "We have been harmed by this," he said. "They (police) decided they did not want this party to happen... the police blunder may end up costing the taxpayers."

And the Racine police still don't get it. "When we see probable cause to make an arrest, we do it," said police spokesman Sgt. Macemon. "The courts may disagree, but I don't think we would do anything different."

Racine taxpayers might have something to say about that when the bills start coming in.

## Drugs allegedly used to buy votes in "Methville USA"

According to a report in the *Oklahoman*, a two-year investigation into a Haskell County sheriff runoff election has resulted in charges in what is alleged to be the state's first drugs-for-votes scandal.

Four arrests were made after an investigation into claims that Haskell County residents were offered either money or drugs for their absentee ballot packets, said Kym Koch, spokeswoman for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. The agency routinely investigates voter fraud, but this is the first investigation suggesting that drugs were exchanged for absentee ballots, Koch said. Questions about absentee ballots—an unusually high number—led to an OSBI investigation into Haskell County elections, District Attorney Jim Bob Miller said. "Oklahoma law says that one to one-and-a-half percent of absentee ballots in an election is normal," Miller said. "In Haskell County in the last election, absentee ballots made up 20 percent of votes cast."

According to court documents voters were offered either \$20 or a "quarter paper of crank" for their absentee voter packets. Authorities said "a quarter paper of crank" or methamphetamine is equivalent to a quarter ounce of the drug.

## MPP sues the Drug Czar

In last November's elections, for the first time in recent years more drug reform initiatives lost than won. Why those defeats occurred is the subject of much debate, but there are few who would fail to include the role of an energized and organized opposition spearheaded by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and its director, drug czar John Walters. Walters crisscrossed the country in the months leading up to the elections, making stops in states such as Arizona, Michigan, Nevada and Ohio to campaign against reform efforts. Now the Marijuana Policy Project is fighting back, charging Walters with violating federal and state election laws.

MPP executive director Rob Kampia drew a bead directly on Walters' forehead in a press release preceding a press conference on Thursday, December 5. "During the fall campaign, John Walters declared war on the law and war on the truth," Kampia said.

"Today, on behalf of US taxpayers -- including the 5,000 who contributed to our campaign -- we are declaring war on the

drug czar for his illegal and dishonest activities. In filing this official complaint, we are calling for the removal of John Walters from office for gross violations of the Hatch Act." The Hatch Act, originally enacted in 1887, bars federal employees from carrying out certain campaign-related activities.

"Walters has committed numerous crimes against the taxpayers," Kampia added. "He used his official authority to affect the outcome of the Question 9 election (marijuana legalization in Nevada), as well as other state drug policy initiatives, in plain violation of the Hatch Act. Because none of this activity was properly reported as campaign contributions, he is in equally plain violation of Nevada campaign finance laws. Walters conducted a campaign of lies against Question 9, using the taxpayers' money to spread misinformation."

## Study says "gateway theory" is bunk

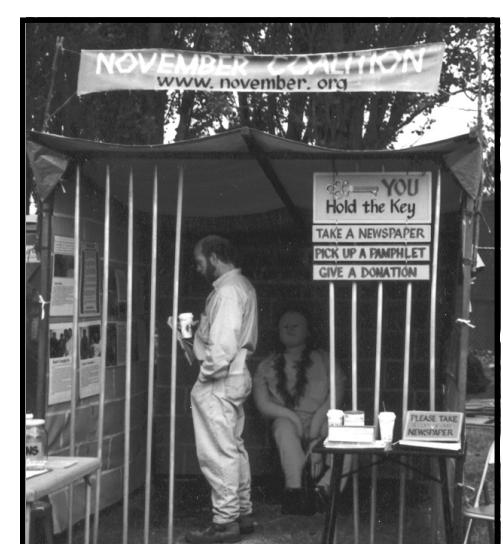
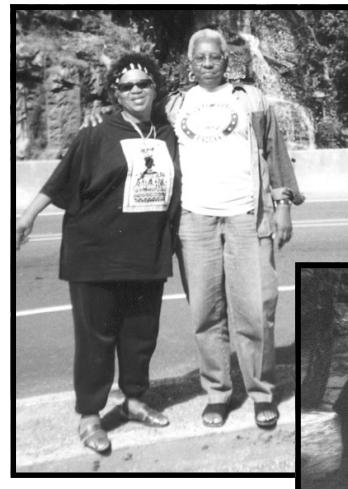
The RAND Corporation's Drug Policy Research Center released a study in December that casts grave doubt on the validity of the "gateway theory," the intuitive but unproven notion that the use of marijuana leads to the use of harder drugs. The "gateway theory" has guided US drug policy for a half-century and has been used by prohibitionists to justify imposing tough penalties for even the possession of small amounts of marijuana. In recent months, drug czar John Walters and others of his breed have seized on the "gateway theory" to campaign against relaxing marijuana laws in the states.

According to the study's lead author, Andrew Morral, "We've shown that the marijuana gateway effect is not the best explanation for the link between marijuana use and the use of harder drugs. An alternative, simpler and more compelling explanation accounts for the pattern of drug use you see in this country, without resort to any gateway effects. While the gateway theory has enjoyed popular acceptance, scientists have always had their doubts. Our study shows that these doubts are justified," he said.

"If our model is right, it has significant policy implications," Morral continued. "For example, it suggests that policies aimed at reducing or eliminating marijuana availability are unlikely to make any dent in the hard drug problem. When enforcement resources that could have been used against heroin and cocaine are instead used against marijuana, this could have the unintended effect of worsening heroin and cocaine use."

The study is getting attention from drug specialists. "This is a very important study with broad implications for marijuana control policy," said Charles R. Schuster, former director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse and now director of the Addiction Research Institute at Wayne State University. "I can only hope that it will be read with objectivity and evaluated on its scientific merits, not reflexively rejected because it violates most policy makers' beliefs."

## Seattle Hempfest draws 150,000



Carrie Graves and Elaine Lynch of the November Coalition visit Washington state for the Seattle Hempfest

miserable war; it is a racist war," Seattle City Councilman Nick Licata told the crowd on Saturday.

Despite vows of "zero tolerance" and a handful of arrests for marijuana sales, police at Hempfest generally behaved themselves.

Speaking from six stages scattered along the length of Myrtle Edwards Park, local and national drug reformers included Keith Stroup and Allen St. Pierre of NORML; Kevin Zeece of Common Sense for Drug Policy; medical marijuana patient Elvy Musikka; "pot pride" campaign organizer Mikki Norris; November Coalition leaders Nora Callahan and Chuck Armsbury; Ohio Hemper's Don Wirtshafter and many more. (Source: *The Week Online* story, 8/23/02)

# Montana activists hold first drug policy summit

FROM THE WEEK ONLINE WITH DRCNET

The University of Montana in Missoula was the site of Montana drug reformers' first statewide Drug Policy Summit, September 5-7. Marijuana activists, harm reductionists, concerned citizens and university students gathered over two evenings to hear a plethora of local and national drug reformers denounce the war on drugs and call on local activists to open a new battlefield in Big Sky country. On Saturday, summitters joined hundreds of other attendees in a daylong celebration of cannabis culture at the Missoula Hempfest in downtown's Caras Park.

Co-organized by Montana NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) head John Masterson and Missoula nurse Frances DeForrest, the event introduced Montana audiences to nationally known drug reformers. These included Kevin Zeece of Common Sense for Drug Policy, Cliff Thornton of Efficacy, and Ron Mann, director of "Grass," the widely acclaimed documentary about the criminalization of marijuana.

Other national figures with local or regional links included former Missoulian and author Dan Baum ("Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure"). Chuck Armsbury and Nora Callahan of The November Coalition motored from nearby north eastern Washington state to press their issues of relief for drug war prisoners. University of Montana researcher and Editor of "Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics," Dr. Ethan Russo, also addressed the summit, as did local activists such as



Featured speaker Cliff Thornton, founder of Efficacy

Masterson, Missoula defense attorney John Smith, and Montana ACLU head Scott Crichton.

Attendance at the summit was about 75 people on the first night and more than a hundred on the second night, which included a screening of Mann's film, "Grass."

"We think the summit was an absolute success," Masterson told Phil Smith of DRCNet. "We had close to a hundred people sign up on our list of people who wanted to actively participate in drug reform in Montana. That's important. We're thrilled at having met so many students who are ready to get active."

The budding activists certainly drew inspiration from the speakers, as well as being challenged to locate their activism in a broader political context. Thornton, who traveled from Connecticut to address the summit, challenged the audience to confront the racism that permeates the war on drugs. "It's easier for white people to believe that Elvis is alive than to recognize that racism still exists in this country," he said. While noting that drug laws are not racist on their face, Thornton said, "White America focuses on the intent of the law, but black America looks at the effect."

Dan Baum called for "class consciousness," a term usually forbidden in US political discourse, and for drug reformers to ally themselves with other progressive movements. "We are being raped" by the drug enforcers, Baum said. "I despair when I see anti-drug war people focus exclusively on drugs. Seattle (the 1999 World Trade Organization disorders) was our fight; the environment is our fight; social justice is our fight. We need a broader analysis," he told the audience.

Masterson told DRCNet the summit aimed to broaden the drug reform movement in Montana and bring it to a mainstream audience, but admitted that the effort was less than completely successful. "We were aiming at folks like the PTA or the city council, but if they were there, they must have been in disguise," he said. "While we're thrilled to have contacted and educated scores of students, it is disappointing that more Missoulians didn't show up to dialogue with us about this failed drug war. Maybe next year."

By next year, Missoulians could have more reason to confront drug policy issues, Masterson said. "We are having our first Grizzly (University of Montana) NORML meeting next week, and we are considering a local initiative in either Missoula or Missoula County that would establish prosecutorial guidelines telling law enforcement and the courts that marijuana crimes should only be prosecuted under certain conditions, such as if a minor is involved or if the quantities suggest drug trafficking,"

he explained. "The vast majority of marijuana use would then be outside the purview of law enforcement."

In his address to the summit, Masterson reviewed the most recent poll (from 1998) on Montanans' attitude toward drug reform, telling the audience that medical marijuana and industrial hemp had 70% support and half of Montanans surveyed would support regulating and taxing marijuana like alcohol or tobacco. In a telling indication of the libertarian conservative ethos that pervades much of the West, 2% of respondents objected to regulating and taxing pot on the grounds that they wanted "no new taxes."

Masterson had only praise for the national reformers who attended—and some advice for other local activists interested in doing something similar. "Thanks to Nora Callahan for suggesting I call Kevin Zeece," he said. "I pretty much just cold called him and asked if he could come, and he said, 'What day?' He turned out to be a real linchpin in this thing, and I feel really fortunate to have spent some time with him discussing the future of drug reform in Montana. We basically cold called everyone and got a real good response. If you want to do something similar, don't be shy about picking up the phone."

The primary focus in Montana will be marijuana reform, Masterson said. "The Montana agenda is to protect those who use marijuana, but we support the efforts of the harm reduction community and would love to work with them on broader reform issues," he said.

In the meantime, in Montana as elsewhere, there is evidence of a divide between Cannabis Nation and users of other drugs. Hempfest visitors talking about methamphetamine at November Coalition's 'jailhouse' booth often sounded more like Asa Hutchinson than Kevin Zeece. November Coalition, which has organized a national petition drive focussing on getting all drug war prisoners out from behind bars, has more than once heard versions of the following dialogue as they consider signing:

"Is this just for pot prisoners?" "No." "Then I won't sign."

Oh, Cannabis Nation. When they came for the speed freaks, I did nothing.

To learn more about drug reform in Montana:  
[www.montananorml.org](http://www.montananorml.org)



Scott Crichton,  
ACLU Montana

## Back in the home office

By TOM MURLOWSKI

Well, it appears I've re-enlisted with Nora, Chuck and The November Coalition.

Some of you might remember me from several years ago, when I moved from Southern California to Colville to be Associate Director of TNC. I was highly motivated, having just witnessed a dear friend named Suzan sent to federal prison on drug conspiracy charges. Even though the Coalition's mission was so serious, and sometimes unbearably heart-breaking, those years were just about the most exciting and rewarding time of my life. I worked harder than I ever had, met many wonderful people in the activist community, and even learned to chop wood to stay warm in the winter. The only drawback was that I missed my family and friends in California.

Two-and-a-half years ago my brother John asked me to help out his family. John is a feature film director in Hollywood, and had committed just about all of his time and resources to a film he co-wrote, co-produced and directed: Black Cadillac, starring Randy Quaid. John had stretched himself pretty thin, and he and his wife Dâna (a full-time substance-abuse therapist) needed someone to watch over Mariah and Sophia, their twin baby girls. In short, they needed—a nanny.

It was a tough decision for me, complicated by the fact that as a life-long bachelor, I had zero experience with small children. I'd never changed a diaper in my life! After much deliberation, I seized the opportunity to be with my family. Turns out I was pretty a good nanny; at least my nieces seem to think so.

After spending every day with them, watching them take their first steps and say their first words, I've grown to love those girls as much as if they were my own. They're four-and-a-half now, and in their first year of full-time pre-school. They no longer require a full-time nanny. I needed a new direction in my life—or maybe an old one?

As Nora, Chuck and the Coalition were planning their Journey for Justice, circumstances arose that dramatically reduced the TNC home office staff. Contributing editor Mark Harrison became very ill and unable to assist, and Tina Cummings, his companion and TNC's office manager, had to drive him 600 miles roundtrip each week for chemotherapy. I had kept in close touch with TNC and stayed involved in drug policy reform while I was gone, and jumped at the chance to work for the Coalition again.

I have a new motivation now to end the insanity of the war on drugs. I don't want those little girls growing up in a country capable of such cruelty and injustice. It was so tough telling them why I had to leave; I tried to explain that there were a lot of people in trouble, and they needed my help. That's when Mariah and Sophia came to a sort of understanding, probably due to our shared affection for comic book heroes.

"Like Superman?" they asked, almost in unison.

Well, not quite, but thanks for the vote of confidence, my sweet little nieces. I miss you.

Mariah (left) and Sophia with Uncle Tom

## Journey for Justice New Haven, CT 10/22/02 March & vigil at Whalley Jail



Barbara Fair of People Against Injustice

# MAIL CALL



Dear November Coalition,  
I write from Australia where the drug problem is addressed with some compassion and those not directly involved in the distribution of substances are more often than not given a stint in a re-hab or let out to try and have another go at breaking the chains of addiction. My home town (city) has a free needle exchange, peer education, and regular updates on things like Hep C, HIV and all other issues; e.g. what to do when an overdose occurs. Our paramedics do not call police to OD's and therefore most people get to live instead of having their bodies thrown from a moving car near the hospital door. This is what happened 20 years ago. I am appalled at reading your website. I had no idea your country was so very inhumane.

I would appreciate any news or opportunity to do something for your cause. 30 year sentences are unheard of in Australia, murderers normally are released after about 12 years or so. I do not condone this but the difference in sentences here and there are amazing. I write articles for our using population called "Pure S" and included the story of Debbie Vineyard in a recent edition. Her story was received with horror and disbelief. God bless you all who are trying to get justice for the victims of the drug war industry. We worry about the US trying to rush in to Iraq without the blessing of the UN and because of Australia's alliance with the US we are now a target of terrorists and for the first time in our history we are on alert.

Sincerely, Scott McDonald

Thank you very much for posting my husband's story in your latest issue. Bob and I were so pleased to be recognized as one of the many victims of this horrible unkind

"drug war." Your passion for us and everyone like us is great.

Thank you, Beatrice Boltz

As a first time drug offender I find your magazine very enlightening and informative in this drug war, a war against our own people.

Also I was wondering if you've ever considered doing a story on the DEA, the police using certain rock concerts as bait for mass drug arrests, like the way they used to do with the Grateful Dead. It continues today; for example, the weekend of April 26-28, 2002 at the Mountain View Stadium outside of Birmingham, Alabama, the police arrested over 200 people on drug charges and over 100 on felony drug charges at a "Widespread Panic" concert. Just an idea. 200 drug arrests at one show is outrageous. Anyway, if you could provide me with a copy of "Razor Wire", it would be very appreciated.

Thank you, Robert L Scarbrough

I am writing to let you know that I am still at the same address and that I am still interested in receiving a copy of your publication. I last wrote concerning the use of the IONTRACK drug detection units being used in the visiting rooms of different BOP institutions throughout the country. This letter was sort of a response to the article, "My Whole Family Tested Positive", by Bev Draper. I also sent you a copy of the lawsuit recently filed in the Southern District of Texas, in which one of the issues of that suit was the faulty

procedure used by BOP staff in the testing of prisoners' family and friends.

Well, thank you once again for seeing that my copy of the Razor Wire gets to me every couple of months. The best to you all, in the coming new year.

Sincerely, Scott Mark Lair

Recently, at USP Coleman were able to see the first hour of the TV program "Guilt by Association". The reason we were not able to see more was 'lockdown' occurs at 10 PM. The TVs were also turned off. But what we did see of the program was very good because it showed how the little fish does most of the time while the big ones get away since they have things to offer the prosecutor in most cases.

Now what needs to happen with that movie is for a major TV station to air it during prime time and on a major network. Maybe more Americans will see it and learn how the number system really works. You may also want to show that it is not only women who get caught up in this mess. You can take my case as an example. The Cls in my case are home while I am doing a life sentence without possibilities of making parole. But if you look at my Cl's criminal records you will see that they are not church going types. As a matter of fact, their criminal histories were so long that it took the better part of several trees to make the paper for their past criminal records. On the other hand, me: first time drug violator. Look at where I am! Something needs to take place here and soon. My family has been destroyed while the real culprits are home with theirs. That does not sit well with me and I hope that America wakes up to this crime of locking us up forever while the real creeps go free because they have things or people to offer in exchange.

Sincerely, David Correa, Prisoner of the Drug War

How are you and your group doing? Fine, I hope. I'm sitting here in prison with a 19 year and 7 month sentence for crack cocaine. Sometimes I feel like my life has been taken by this government that is supposed to protect the people. I feel the government breaks up happy homes. I have a drug conspiracy charge. My mother has two sons; both of her sons are imprisoned, and my father is just sick about it. My big brother has two life sentences, and we have a best friend on our case who got 17 years and six months be-

cause people lied about us.

I was working as a service technician apprentice. I had put my past behind me. Me and my big brother never saw 'eye to eye,' but he put the past behind him, too. I guess you can't change who you are, or change your life. Before this happened our family was happy because we had just started doing everything like a family. My mother and father were so happy because their sons were doing good for the first time in their lives. I had my first son in November of 1997. I am going to end this letter with thank you for any help you can give. My brother's attorney told me to write you. She said you work with people with non-violent drug cases.

Lee Page Driver

For many, many years I have always heard the same old phrase when someone was referring to anything that was normal or common place or even mundane. But it seems we may need to change that "white bread" phrase. Especially if you go to Talladega Fed. Correctional. For those in charge of that facility have declared white bread is now to be considered a luxury item. And because the commissary is not permitted to sell or carry any luxury items it therefore will no longer carry

white bread. And who knows, crackers may be next. I guess those purveyors of this inhumanity want or expect those inside to spread or place peanut butter and jelly, and even sardines, on pieces of paper. Mmmmm. Yummy. But, at this rate PBJ & Sardines may soon be categorized as gourmet fare!

The aforementioned information is from Robert Q Jonas a very old friend and resident of that facility and a victim of the War on Drugs, doing natural life. I do correspond with him and others. I visit when possible and because RJ is trying to transfer to Coleman FCI FL he is obviously not about to file a grievance or write to anyone about this today "it would definitely put the old kabosh on any request." Also RJ was hopeful that the new "Old Mans Bill" might assist with his situation. It was, I believe, ten years or half

of a sentence and 65 years old to be eligible for release. But it does not seem those with life are going to be included even if they are not and were not violent or convicted of same. My logic for that is 73, is the national average male life expectancy. So if you went in at 53 and have done ten years that would also be half of one's life expectancy or the national average. Everyone should get the same consideration. The only exclusion is of course violent offenders for they unfortunately can still be considered a threat to society. I do not fully agree with that stereotypical mind set. For there are many who made one mistake and are remorseful. But the System does not even think about those realities.

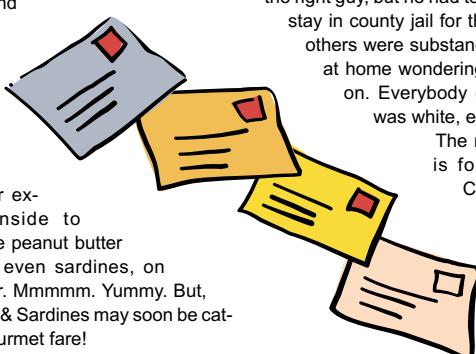
Respectfully Yours, Paul Wilson Meyer

I really enjoy your paper, enclosed are a few stamps, and I hope it will help. When I got busted in '98, a small army came into my house, "full riot gear" to serve me a community complaint. In a small east-Texas town. The local police weren't involved. The raid was from a unit calling themselves, Ark-a-Tex Task Force. Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas combined. They raided several black men's homes. One wasn't home, and turned himself in later. Another man arrested wasn't the right guy, but he had to hire a lawyer and stay in county jail for three months. Two others were substance abusers. I was at home wondering what was going on. Everybody on the task force was white, except for Harry.

The reason I'm writing is for my old friend, Chester Lawson.

He was shot and killed by the CADDY Parish task force. No one cared that a week prior to their raid, Chester had an attempted robbery at his house. He shot the attempted robber, but didn't kill him. No one cared that Chester was a recovering drug-addict. I know he was selling drugs, but that is what mostly happens. Nothing was done about their gung-ho raid. Justice had been done! It took a task-force and the FBI to arrest six black men and kill one back in 1998. Rest in Peace, Chester.

Raydeen Edwards



## THE WALL

### Susana Cruz

#### 14 Years—Cocaine Conspiracy

I am 52 years old with four children and two grandchildren. I have lived in the United States for the past twenty-one years and have worked honorably, paying and filing my taxes year after year. Today I am serving a 14-year prison sentence at FCI Dublin, California.

My story begins a man I met at a party in early September of 1997. We became friends, then began an intimate relationship which led to me being unjustly accused of involvement in a drug business.

On an early morning in October 1998, the FBI came to my apartment with an arrest warrant. The FBI told me that they wanted to conduct an interview with me; I was not under arrest, and when the interview was over, I would be free. They searched my apartment and found nothing illegal, then took me to what I assumed was an interrogation center in Los Angeles. The next thing I knew I was being transported to the state of Alaska where I was charged with a drug conspiracy.

I have never traveled to any place or state to commit any crime. I never witnessed any illegal activities of which my boyfriend was accused. We never lived together. He visited the apartment, and occasionally spent the night with me, but we did not share a home.

I went to trial thinking the government of the United States was fair and just. Instead of justice, the government created lies, and accused me of a drug conspiracy without having any evidence. They used informants to speak against me, saving themselves from their crimes with reduced sentences in exchange for their testimony.

I gave my court appointed attorney substantial proof of my whereabouts on the days the drug activity was supposed to have happened. I have my employer's statements showing that I was at work, and could not possibly have been in two places at once. Although my

attorney had this and other information, he never presented it at trial or during my sentencing. He did not defend me in the slightest.

In the judgement the federal attorney stated that he believed the informants over me. My attorney told me that the federal attorney was a very nice man, and if I cooperated with him and gave him the information needed to convict my boyfriend, things would go well for me.

I asked him what kind of information they needed or wanted. A few days passed, and the federal attorney sent another message through my attorney; this time he said that all charges against me would be dropped, and he would send me to a halfway house if I pled guilty.

I did not plead guilty because I am innocent and believed in the American way, in American justice.

Now, with help from God, I have been able to withstand this horrible experience. What has kept me from going crazy is thinking of the pain and suffering my family and children are going

through, and how it has affected them. I do not want to make matters worse for them, and so I endure this time.

The injustice of the government corruption destroys many other families besides my own. Innocent people who have never been in trouble with the law are serving outrageous sentences.

Due to my unfortunate destiny of becoming involved with a charming man, my whole life has changed. This whole situation has destroyed my life, the lives of my children and relatives. My youngest grandchild was born since I have been incarcerated, and I don't even know her. I have not yet been able to see her. My whole desire is to keep myself together until I am able to reunite with my family. The prison where I am held is so far from my family that they cannot visit regularly. Someday I would like to be able to see my grandchildren grow up.



### Mario Santana

#### Life in Prison—Possession with Intent to Deliver Cocaine

My case began on January 24, 1994 when I was asked by a friend to take him to a McDonald's restaurant. He said he had to take something to a friend, and he was paying me to give him a ride. I had no knowledge of what he had in the package and what he was going to do. When he noticed that we were being followed, he jumped out of the car and ran. I was arrested. I am Hispanic and was not fluent in English. One of the arresting officers was my interpreter and wrote the statements that I signed. I was the only one charged even though the package was not mine, did not have my fingerprints and was found outside the vehicle.

I miss my daughters, and I regret my decision to give that friend a ride. I am paying with the rest of my life for my mistake. I can't be part of my daughters' life; I won't be there for their graduations, for their fifteenth birthday or for any special event in their lives. What hurts the most is that I'm paying for something that was not mine.

All there is for me are these walls and my faith in God. I also have my fiancé who is standing by my side one hundred percent and is willing to be with my wife even though she doesn't know if we will ever have the opportunity to be together.

Thank you for caring and keeping my hopes high and alive.

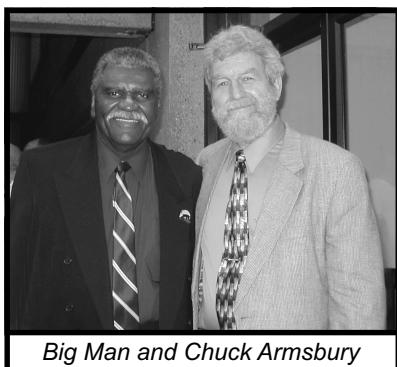
## Editors Notes

BY CHUCK ARMSBURY, SENIOR EDITOR, THE NOVEMBER COALITION

Nora and I attended the 35<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the Black Panther Party last April in Washington, DC. I had been asked to co-chair a workshop with the Party newspaper's founding editor, Elbert "Big Man" Howard, on racial and political solidarity. In the late 1960s I lived in Eugene, Oregon where I helped organize a local chapter of the Chicago Young Patriots. Modeled after the BPP's Ten-Point Program, similar chapters were starting up throughout the country in white, working class communities. We were dedicated to feeding hungry kids a good breakfast and helping develop other community-based programs to meet peoples' essential needs.

Panthers, Patriots, Young Lords, Brown Berets, the American Indian Movement and similar grassroots' groups in the late 1960s/early 1970s 'Rainbow Coalitions' were hammered by the murderous policies of repression specified in Richard Nixon's COINTELPRO strategy designed to stifle dissent in the US population. At the extreme, political assassinations (Fred Hampton of the Chicago BPP in 1969, most notably) and life sentences were fated for some as part of Nixon's and FBI Director Hoover's conspiratorial methods of control. Even today a few Panthers languish in America's

nastiest dungeons where some, like the Angola 2 (Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace) in Louisiana, have been held in segregation for almost 30 years.



Big Man and Chuck Armsbury

Most BPP veterans we met are still actively involved in their communities, still calling for 'power to the people,' still serving the peoples' needs. To our surprise and honor, Illinois U.S. Congressman Bobby Rush attended the solidarity workshop. As a former Chicago Panther (and close friend to the murdered Fred Hampton) Rush laughed heartily with about 25 others as the graying heads recalled forgotten names and faces from those energized days of heady and deadly struggle. Thanks to Billy X Jennings and staff at "It's About Time" Newsletter ([www.itsabouttimebpp.com](http://www.itsabouttimebpp.com)) for all their hard work building the BPP archives.

In early June Nora and I traveled to Hickory, North Carolina where Nora had been invited to give a drug war presentation to the gathering of the Fifteenth North Carolina Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Association. Thanks to persistent effort by Carrie Graves and Elaine Lynch of nearby Charlotte, the ELCA agreed to sponsor a workshop at the gathering to educate their members about how the drug war harms children and the families of the people sentenced for drug convictions.

As a sign that ordinary Americans recognize the hypocrisy of a 'drug war,' a white, middle-class woman asked early in the workshop, "Why don't we just legalize and regulate all drugs?" Two other women seconded her suggestion. Interestingly, what is often an arguable point among drug reformers was merely common sense to this person. The ELCA leaders adopted a resolution of concern for the innocent victims of the war on drugs, the children.

Kevin Zeese deserves special mention. He's a brother, a friend, and a good man. His periodic public appearances with Nora and me in Detroit, New York City and Washington, DC revealed qualities of leadership that helped us 'stay the course' during the first Journey for

Justice. Kevin blends wit and quick response with an easy style and obvious passion. Thank you, Kevin, for use of your home, your time and always-constructive mentoring.

**Correction:** On page 15 of the spring 2002 Razor Wire we listed Prison Policy News as a project that offers free books to prisoners across the nation. Prison Policy News is a "bi-monthly magazine which reviews news and events of interest to prisoners and activists, not a books for prisoners program," wrote Executive Director Stephen Raher.

Raher said many prisoners are requesting books from his office after seeing Prison Policy News listed as a source of books in our newspaper. Raher wrote, "We do send books to Colorado inmates only, and they should address their correspondence to the Colorado Prisoner Reading and Education Project, PO Box 2143, Colorado Springs, CO 80901."



Big Man and Rep. Bobby Rush

### November Coalition meeting, Brooklyn, NY—Nov 26, 2002



William "Billy X" Jennings,  
Editor, It's About Time

### Camp Meeting, Alderson, WV—Nov 8, 2002



The November Coalition and The Journey for Justice would like to express our sincere thanks to the following individuals and organizations who helped make the first phase of our journey a resounding success.

Special thanks to Richard Lake, Matt Elrod, and Debra Harper of DrugSense for web hosting and technical support  
Kevin Zeese and Doug McVay of Common Sense for Drug Policy  
Phil Smith and the Drug Resource Coordination Network (DRCNet)  
Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) and Rep. Carolyn Cheeks-Kilpatrick (D-MI)  
Amanda Brazel, our newest November Coalition Regional Leader  
The University of Michigan chapter of Students for Sensible Drug Policy  
Pam Lynch, Debra Wright, and the Drug Policy Forum of Michigan  
Dan Solano and Police Officers for Drug Policy Reform  
The National Lawyers Guild  
Law Enforcement Against Prohibition  
Charles Thomas and Unitarian Universalists for Drug Policy Reform  
Cliff Thornton and Efficacy  
Adam Hurter and Wesleyan University, MI  
Barbara Fair and People Against Injustice  
Amu Ptah and the Harm Reduction Coalition  
Paul "Tex" Hale and the Fordham School of Law  
Randy Credico and Mothers of the Disappeared  
Dr. Ernest Drucker, Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
Deborah Small and Drug Policy Alliance  
The Legal Action Center  
Teresa Aviles and the Isidro Aviles Memorial Chapter of The November Coalition  
Diane Fornbacher and the Tri-State Drug Policy Forum (DE, NJ, PA)  
Temple University Beasley School of Law  
Roseanne Scotti and DPA's New Jersey Drug Policy Project  
Sanho Tree and the Institute for Policy Studies  
Shawn Heller and Students for Sensible Drug Policy  
Melody Karr and Michigan Cannabis Action Network  
Rainbow Farm Campground  
Claude Tower and Wisconsin SSDP  
Bob Newland, Marletta Pacheco and South Dakota Peace & Justice Center  
and all the friends and allies who attended our Journey for Justice events.



### How to communicate with us

- We receive lots of mail. Rest assured that we read every one of them, but we simply don't have the time or staff to actually respond to more than a few.
- **Legal Cases:** We cannot offer you legal representation or advice. Please do not send us your legal work unless specifically requested.
- **Prisoner Profiles (The Wall):** Please continue to submit your stories, but if at all possible, send us a picture along with your story, preferably of a prison visit with your loved ones. Stories should be concise, factual, and include personal background, such as age, family status etc.
- **Articles for Razor Wire & Web:** Editorials should be no more than 800 words; articles no more than 1,200 words. Submitted items should be typed, double space, or neatly printed by hand if you don't have access to a typewriter. Please limit the use of bold, italics, underline, or other special formatting.
- **Artwork:** We need your cartoons and sketches, please! Let your creativity and imagination run wild.
- **Donations:** We will gladly accept postage stamps from prisoners and others, as well as monetary donations.
- **Find your local TNC Regional Volunteer:** Go to [www.november.org/projects/Regional.html](http://www.november.org/projects/Regional.html)

## Upcoming conferences



### National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws 2003 Conference—San Francisco

April 17 to April 19, 2003  
Hyatt Regency Hotel  
5 Embarcadero Center  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
Phone: (415) 788-1234



### Drug Policy Alliance Biennial Conference—New Jersey

November 5 to November 8, 2003  
Sheraton Meadowlands Hotel and Conference Center  
2 Meadowlands Plaza  
East Rutherford, NJ 07073  
Phone: (201) 896-0500

## **Journey for Justice • Winter 2003 Schedule**

The November Coalition is presently scheduling the next phase of our Journey for Justice, through the central United States and into Florida and the southeast. For up-to-date details on our emerging events, see our website at [www.journeyforjustice.org](http://www.journeyforjustice.org). If you live along the path of our Journey and would like to organize or volunteer for events, contact us at (509) 684-1550 or [moreinfo@journeyforjustice.org](mailto:moreinfo@journeyforjustice.org)

Thu, Jan 9 • Spokane, WA	Wed, Feb 12 • Jacksonville, FL
Fri, Jan 10 • Missoula, MT	7:00 PM: Drug War Forum, Unitarian Universalist Church
Thu - Fri, Jan 16 - 17 • Omaha, NE	Sat - Sun, Feb 15 - 16 • Savannah, GA
Sun, Jan 19 • Kansas City, MO	Organizer(s): Lisa Lane
Sat, Jan 25 • Marianna, FL	Wed, Feb 19 • Charleston, SC
November Coalition Camp Meeting	7:00 PM: Drug War Forum, College of Charleston
Sun, Jan 26 • Tallahassee, FL	Fri - Sun, Feb 21 - 23 • Orlando, FL
9:45 AM: Unitarian Universalist Adult Forum - Impact of Antidrug Laws on Families	Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice Conference: "Toxic Sludge is Good for You"; examines how PR and propaganda shape public opinion
Wed, Jan 29 • Orlando, FL	Mon - Wed, Mar 3 - 5 • Durham, NC
University of Central Florida NORML	Duke University
Thu, Jan 30 • Orlando, FL	Fri - Sun, Mar 7 - 9 • Charlotte, NC
Valencia Community College	Wed, Mar 13 • Atlanta, GA
Sun, Feb 2 • Clearwater, FL	Mon, Mar 17 • Mobile, AL
9:30 PM: Open Issues Discussion Group, Unitarian Universalist Church	Wed, Mar 19 • New Orleans, LA
Fri, Feb 7 • Miami, FL	
Sat, Feb 8 • Miami, FL	
November Coalition Camp Meeting	

## **Who Is The November Coalition?**

We are a growing body of citizens whose lives have been gravely affected by our government's present drug policy. We are prisoners, parents of those incarcerated, wives, sisters, brothers, children, aunts, uncles and cousins. Some of us are loving friends and concerned citizens, each of us concerned that drug war casualties are rising in absolutely horrific proportions.

The November Coalition is a non-profit, grassroots organization with a mission to educate the public about the destructive increase in prison population in the United States due to our current drug laws. We alert fellow citizens, particularly those who are complacent or naive, about the present and impending dangers of an overly powerful federal authority acting far beyond its constitutional constraints. The drug war is an assault and steady erosion of our civil rights and freedoms by federal and state governments.

We are convinced that the war on drugs and drug prohibition do nothing but stimulate an ever more profitable underground economy. The intent of any law should create a safer country and safer world, not one simply less free.

# **The November Coalition**

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